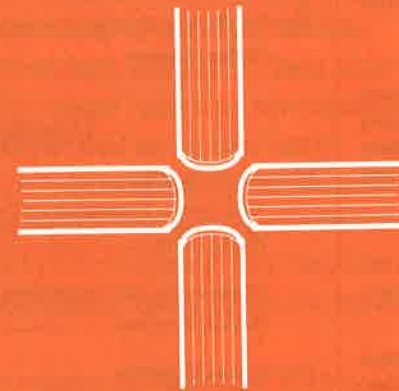


SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993 VOLUME 129 NUMBER 1

LUTHERAN EDUCATION



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Lutheran Education

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This is being written in early August. With horrifying swift-
ness, the end of the month will see most of us hurled into the maelstrom
of a new school year. And by the time this issue of the journal is in your
hands, you will be making promises of "getting around to it *maybe* by
Thanksgiving!"

Well, don't.

You must do better than that since there are a number of offerings
packaged herein that just may help prevent your being bent out of
shape by Turkey Time.

Like? For examples, choose from the following...

Don Deffner's timely caution to remember that, in using the Ten
Commandments in whatever ways you select with the Spirit's guid-
ance, *love*, not fear, is to be the guiding principle.

Or learn from *Steve Christopher* that managing your life and
managing time may not necessarily be equivalent activities.

For the classroom practitioners, *Bob Baden's* ideas about teach-
ing creative writing and *Ken Mangel's* alert to the new standards of the
mathematics education people could not be more timely.

And since one of the months mentioned on the masthead of this
issue is that one associated with the Reformation, what could be more
appropriate than an article by *Kurt Stadtwald*? This time, Kurt zeroes
in on Luther's mouth which, you may know, got him into trouble from
time to time.

And for those of us engaged in Bible class teaching, *Nathan
Jastram* evaluates the Old Testament edition of the New Revised
Standard Version of the Bible.

Finally, but not least, we are invited to re-visit the year which most
of us recall as the one that produced the greatest number of "Memories
that Bless and Burn." Yes, we are talking about the first year of
teaching. *Rachel Versemann* helps us remember it via her own excur-
sion backward.

Steady, now. Take in the above as a token of the unseen host of
fellow Lutheran teachers who have entered the fray with you and
whose reliance on our Lord's tender mercies will see us all through to
victories both major and minor.✠

In
This
Issue

Matters
of
Opinion

Wayne Lucht

Transparent, Translucent, or Opaque?

Some time ago in one of these musings, I recounted an incident while sitting on one of the major boards of Synod as the political wars within the Missouri Synod were heating up. The agenda that day was not particularly controversial in any way although for reasons difficult to recall differences of opinion took on an acrimonious edge. In exasperation, one of the participants said, "If someone were to enter this room and say, 'I would see Jesus,' could we point to any one of us as His representative?"

A new year of tending the Lord's flock is upon us. As the parish education program gains momentum, participants in it from the very youngest to the most mature come to the table we have prepared with that same statement, "We would see Jesus!"

How we respond to that need, that is, how effectively we respond, will be the true test of the ministry in which we find ourselves.

Perhaps our effectiveness can be measured or gauged as we think of ourselves as being either transparent, translucent, or opaque.

Or at least that is how I look upon any servant of the Word when the Lord's message is being proclaimed or taught. Is s/he transparent, translucent, or opaque?

Most of us settle for translucence in our service to the Lord. We let His light shine through us, sometimes with greater or less brilliance. The learners see in us a luminescence not of our own creation. Although the desire to see Jesus is sometimes blocked by one's own imperfections, the glow is there and does not present a road block to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Transparency, of course, is quite different. Nathaniel, that Israelite without guile, was remarkable and remarked upon by Jesus simply because he was a rarity: someone whose personal agenda did

not interfere with his ministry. And how many Nathaniels do you know or have you known? I do not need all the fingers of one hand to list my candidates. How about you? To see with the utmost clarity the vision of Jesus and the Father's will He conveys is so sadly and so often blurred by His messenger. Yet in His wisdom he chooses imperfect vessels like you and me for that proclamation. From that truth we can take heart.

Yet we must continue to strive against opaqueness in our servanthood, "neither reflecting nor emitting light" says my dictionary. The tragedy of a servant of the Word not having personally experienced the sweetness of God's grace in life is only compounded when attempts are made to share the message never grasped.

The point of it all? Eschew opaqueness, pray for great translucence, and if God gives you grace, at least a few times of utter transparency!✠

William Rietschel

Discouraging and Encouraging Words

In his second "President's Newsletter," Dr. A.L. Barry, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, attempted to offer some words of encouragement to those that serve the Kingdom as teachers in Lutheran schools. He prefaced his supportive commentary with the following:

On the basis of Scripture and the Confessions we believe and teach that Christ established one Gospel office of Word and Sacrament Ministry, the Office of Pastor. The Lutheran Confessions identify this office in Article V of the Augsburg Confession as...the "Preaching Office." From this divinely instituted office, the church has established other offices which participate and share in the duties of the ministry, such as the office of Teacher.

While appreciating the presumed spirit and intent of Barry's ensuing words of encouragement, upon completing reading that section of the newsletter, I couldn't shake a feeling of discouragement. Further reflection led to several possible sources of my sentiment. I was discouraged because the prefatory remarks hearkened me back to a 1981 document, "The Ministry: Office, Procedures, and Nomenclature," prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) in response to questions and requests for guidance regarding the office and functions of those in ministry. It was my understanding at the time that this

document, with its unfortunately discouraging affixing of "auxiliary office" to the teaching ministry, was to be studied and, to an extent, it was. However, this particular CTCR document appears also to have been adopted by the LCMS without being funneled through its polity, thereby avoiding perhaps a broader forum for dialogue. I find this also to be a discouraging circumstance given the significant numbers it impacts and its influence in shaping and focusing views of ministry.

Barry's words are also discouraging because, for me, at least, they conjure up labels which often function to erode our faith community. Missouri's penchant for affixing such monikers as "Conservative," "Liberal," is rather apparent in assessing the most recent decades of its history. President Barry's view of the ministry based upon his reading of Scripture and the Confessions and as reflected in the above quotation appears somewhat restricted. I hold to a view that recognizes the Lutheran school teacher as an active participant in the public ministry of the Church. While not a pastor *per se*, the scope and function of the Lutheran teachers' office is entirely consistent with that of the ministry of the Church, namely, to preach and teach the Word of God in all its truth and purity. I, too, base my belief on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. When I peruse the Augsburg Confession, specifically its definition of ministry in Article V, I read: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the Sacraments." By providing for the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, do we not have, indicated in Article V, a less restrictive, more functional view of the ministry? I realize my question leads to debate and that in certain sectors of the LCMS my view is derisively labeled as "Functionalist." It's not the label itself but rather the arrogance and scorn I sometimes perceive attached to the label that is discouraging.

I'm confident that President Barry's intent was not to discourage and certainly not to label. I doubt also that he intended to resurrect an issue that for many, but not all, within the LCMS has laid somewhat dormant since the early '80s. Rather than continuing the usage of a perspective from an unofficially adopted document, avoiding healthy debate, and my writing editorials, I would instead call upon President Barry to encourage further study of the various perspectives on the public ministry embodied within LCMS tradition. I would hope that this study would include not only those in ordained service, but also those who are commissioned to serve. I would also call on the Lutheran Education Association to once again assume a proactive role regarding this ongoing and important dispute.✠

Donald L. Deffner

Teaching the Ten Commandments: Not "Fear" But Love God



The central thesis of this essay is that the Ten Commandments serve God's ultimate purpose when their negative prohibitions are transformed into positive descriptions of the life of the Christian.

The problem is that many people feel being a Christian as Christian is to obey God's commands of "you shall" and "you shall not" rather than freely and gladly serving God and one's neighbor. We should "fear... God" has often eclipsed "... love God" so that "keeping the law," rather than being motivated by the Gospel, has become one's understanding of the new life in Christ.⁽¹⁾

"We should fear and love God." The Ten Commandments were given to the delivered and redeemed people of God. Old Testament scholars note that Psalm 130:4 ("There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared") means a right relationship with God—the trust and faith which follow repentance. The Today's English Version translates the verse: "But you forgive us, so that we should reverently obey you." Psalm 111:10 says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The TEV translates this: "The way to become wise is to have reverence for the Lord." (See also Deuteronomy 6:2)

And so for the baptized person today who has received the whole deliverance of the cross, "the fear of the Lord" means a reverential love for God, rejoicing in God, and having pleasure in God.

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"We should fear and love God." But what do children (and novices in the faith) think when they hear the word "fear"? Obviously it means "to be afraid." And there are many things in a child's tender young life of which to be afraid. To be sure, both the 1943 and 1991 Concordia Publishing House publications of Luther's Small Catechism qualify the use of the word "fear" in the explanation of the commandments.

1943 catechism:

(31) We fear God above all things when with our whole heart we revere Him as the highest Being, honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him.

(32) We love God above all things when with our whole heart we cling to Him as to our God and gladly devote our lives to His service.⁽²⁾

1991 catechism:

(22) A. We fear God above all things when we revere Him alone as the highest being, honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him.

(22) B. We love God above all things when we cling to Him alone as our God and gladly devote our lives to His service.⁽³⁾

But how many learners have kept that positive element of reverence, awe and "glad devotion" as the context for the New Person-in-Christ's response to the Ten Commandments? And how many teachers by their misuse of theological language or style of teaching have evoked more fear/law motivations rather than the

sweet empowering of the Gospel as the impetus of the Christian's life?

FREE FROM FEAR

The regenerate, New-Person-in-Christ is free from the law, and free from fear.⁽⁴⁾ Fear of penalty or the fear of God's wrath can never be a motivation for performing works which are pleasing to God as signs of faith and flowing from the Holy Spirit.⁽⁵⁾

For the Christian as Christian, living the new life in Christ means to be motivated totally by the Gospel. It is "Christ in me." (Colossians 1:27) There is, therefore, a positive understanding of the Ten Commandments in the life of the Christian. A commandment-by-commandment examination of the implications of this perspective will be undertaken later. But an immediate qualification must be made at this point to avoid any misunderstanding about what Scripture means by being "free from the law." (Romans 7:6)

To see the Ten Commandments in a Scriptural light is not to diminish their claim on the Christian. They are not "the Ten Suggestions." The Christian is not "free to do as one pleases."

An interviewer once asked: "What do you think of the Ten Commandments?"

One person gasped: "Are you kidding?" Another said she didn't take them literally. One man said rules were made to

be broken. And a fourth person said; "Well, I think God loved us very much to give them to us—to protect us from ourselves." (See Deut. 6:24)

The replies of several of those respondents indicates the false permissivity of our age. Such a light dismissal of the Ten Commandments—and God's judgment upon sin—needs to be challenged so that the negative versus the positive aspects of the commandments are not misunderstood.

DO YOUR OWN THING

We live in a decadent culture. Many talk shows ("idiots talking to idiots") typify the moral attitudes of our day:

"If those weirdos can get by with that, then my moral life can't be so bad!" And so people become "the bland being led by the bland." They are like the committee member who said: "I came. I saw. I concurred."⁽⁶⁾

But the Christian is not just a conformist but Christ's person. The will of God is clearly stated: "You shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them." (Lev. 20:23)

And through the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit urges: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the

renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).

I once heard of a university that built a new campus and put in no sidewalks, but only lawns. After two years, when all the paths had developed from dorms to classrooms and to other buildings, the university put in sidewalks to follow those trails.

Some people want all of life to be that way. But God calls us back to the "old paths," the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23:3) and truth (Psalm 25:10) and peace (Prov. 3:17). The moral climate around us may have changed, but God hasn't changed—nor has His desire that we choose His ways.

"Choose you this day whom you will serve." (Jos. 24:15)

TRUE CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

God calls us to resist the mold the "new moralists" force upon us. We must challenge their amoral philosophy for the narrow dogmatism it is. I grant that some people in the church have propounded moralisms in the past which either inhibited or destroyed our enjoyment of God's intrinsically good gifts.

But the new moralists have only damned the old morality to replace it with their own dogmatisms. Christian freedom stands between Victorian morality and the

new legalism of utter permissiveness. Where God has not bound us morally, we dare not make pronouncements that go beyond Scripture. Also, to repeat, Christian freedom doesn't mean we can do anything we wish. (Gal. 5:13-16)

The world will continue to squeeze us into its mold and woo us to an individualism quite different from Christ's humility: "I Gotta Be Me!" (sung by Peggy Lee) or "I Did It My Way!" (sung by Frank Sinatra).

Arthur Carl Piepkorn of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, said; "Don't 'do your own thing'; do God's thing—in your own way."

For if we do not do "God's thing" disastrous results follow. In "doing your own thing" ultimate loneliness and loss of self-respect results. In "doing your own thing" one experiences the tragic effects of a life lived away from God. In "doing your own thing" comes the slow erosion of stable moral values and the callousness that promiscuous people many times feel towards their sexual partners.

And that happens when life is lived in defiance of God's will. For our life is His—not our own.

As the Apostle John said: "Our life in this world is actually His life lived in us." (1 John 4:16 Phillips) What a staggering thought! So I am not just my own

person. For "it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves." (Psalm 100:3)

A POSITIVE COMMANDMENT

So the law of God clearly indicates the self-destructiveness of a life lived in defiance of God and His commandments.

But we are not just prohibited from practicing immorality, but also are positively called to lead pure, moral lives in loving fidelity to God and to our neighbor.

Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like Him. Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave His life for us, as a sweet-smelling sacrifice which pleases God. (Eph. 5:1-2 TEV)

And that is the positive and ultimate aspect of God's law. God doesn't just set down His commandments and then leave us helpless. He sustains us in our Christian walk.

Hear the fantastic promise of this great God: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

When we do fail and come penitently to Him for mercy, He says: "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your

sins." (Isaiah 43:25) God not only forgives, but forgets our sin!

So we can pray former Valparaiso University President O. O. Kretzmann's little prayer again and again: "Oh God, forgive me for the sin of coming back to You and asking forgiveness for a sin You forgave—and forgot—a long time ago!"

What a God! What forgiveness! And what a joy to "thank and to praise, to serve and obey Him! This is most certainly true!"

It is in the light of the above context that the Christian teacher instructs learners in the Ten Commandments. To recap:

- The world tries to squeeze us into its own mold of moral permissivity
- But God is a God of wrath and judgment against sin
- He does demand obedience of His commandments
- But the New-Person-in-Christ does not keep them out of "fear" (one can't, anyway!)
- Instead the forgiven person—"in Christ"—is empowered by the Holy Spirit to a positive living out of the ten opportunities for love and service to God and one's neighbor.

LUTHER ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Martin Luther is very helpful here.⁽⁷⁾ For the Christian instructor's task is complicated in dealing with both the "Old Person" and the "New Person" (the regener-

ate Christian) in teaching the Ten Commandments.

Note well: Luther does keep the commandments' negative prohibitions and even intensifies them in his explanations. Not taking God's name in vain is expanded to an indictment of cursing, swearing, using satanic arts, lying and deception.⁽⁸⁾ Such sins are condemned, but not so the sinner feels that God hates the individual, but that one realize one's condition—and the need to repent.

But even this is not the ultimate goal. The long-range purpose is that "the negative prohibition is transformed into the positive description of the life of the Christian."⁽⁹⁾ (This will be expanded on in detail below). Indeed, in the first and sixth explanations the prohibitions are totally omitted.

This does not mean that Luther was "against the law," or "without the law" or "free of the law." The law still condemns the sinner as one is sinner. But the believer in Christ is untroubled by sin. There has been a transformation and one is now "in Christ," and "the Christian sees the law from an entirely different perspective."⁽¹⁰⁾ The Christian as Christian is free from the accusing function of the law in the sense of prohibition and condemnation.

Oh, to be sure, the Christian is never completely Christian. The "Old Person" is still kicking around, never escapes sin, and needs the threats of the law declaring that God is continually being offended.

But the teacher does not appeal to the law as an empowering agent in dealing with the Christian's new life of sanctification. As David P. Scaer aptly notes:

Fear of penalty or the fear of God's wrath can never be a motivation for performing works which are pleasing to God as signs of faith and flowing from the Holy Spirit.⁽¹¹⁾

The 1991 catechism wisely adds this qualification in question 77 (a statement not made in the 1943 catechism):

C. Third, the Law teaches us Christians what we should and should not do to lead a God-pleasing life (a guide). *The power to live according to the Law comes from the Gospel.*⁽¹²⁾

So "what Luther is describing is not life lived under the law, but the life of Christ himself."⁽¹³⁾ As sinner, the Christian sees God's wrath. As "New Person" the Christian sees God differently—and the Ten Commandments in a positive light:

Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands⁽¹⁴⁾

In summary on Luther:

- "Keeping the Ten Commandments" out of fear of God's wrath against the "Old Person" is not done out of faith and is not part of sanctification.

- A Christian has a dual comprehension of the law:—In regard to the "Old Person" there is prohibition.
- But the "New Person"—empowered by the Holy Spirit—sees the commandments as Christlike activities in the Christian's life.⁽¹⁵⁾

AVOIDING MORALISM

With the above criteria in mind the teacher will also avoid the evil of moralism in teaching the Ten Commandments.

Moralism or moralistic teaching points to certain "works," qualities or virtues, to be achieved in and of themselves. It prescribes them as the means by which one lives the Christian life, rather than seeing them as the result of the Gospel. (And even a call to faith can again become a work.)

The language of moralism includes such incentives as: "oughta""gotta""shoulda""needa"

In the teacher's words it sounds like: "When Jesus came to Mary and Martha's home, Mary wanted to hear God's Word, and you 'should' read your Bible to show your love for God's Word, too." or "The publican repented, and you 'should' repent, too." Or (from the pulpit): "We 'oughta' have more Sunday School teachers next year." or "We 'needa' all get out and have the church cleanup on Saturday."

The fruits of faith and service are to be seen in the Christian life, to be sure. But they are not motivated by moralistic injunctions but by the Gospel. We fail, but the power of the Gospel does that in us which we are unable to do...

Moralism is demonic because it tells me to "Shape up"—but as a sinner I know I cannot. Only the Gospel heartens me, for

it tells me I am forgiven for my failure and points to the cross of Christ. Christ does that in me which I cannot do.⁽¹⁶⁾

JOY IN GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

How then might one teach the Ten Commandments to the regenerate Christian? Both the Old Person and New Person in Christ sit in front of the teacher in the body of the one student. The negative prohibition of the Law (commandments) must be proclaimed to the Old Person.

But the motivating power for the new life in Christ is solely the Gospel! (1991 catechism question 22B) And it is to that Gospel empowerment the student is to be directed. For God says: "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) And the Christian responds: "Oh how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day!" (Psalm 119:97) See also verses 98-104.

With that Gospel/love motif in mind, the following commentary is offered for the teacher's use in instruction in the Ten Commandments.

† † †

The First Commandment (God)

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.⁽¹⁷⁾

Once there was a man going to a masquerade ball dressed in devil's costume. It was

thundering, rainy, stormy night, and the man was driving along a country road. The car went off the road into the ditch. He couldn't get the car started again, so he got out and made his way across a cornfield to a small country church.

Well, the people were inside the church having their evening prayer meeting, singing hymns and praying. And just as this man got to the front door of the church and opened it—dressed in this devil's costume, mind you—there was a bolt of lightning, a clap of thunder. All the people looked around in amazement and saw the devil standing there, and they went out of the doors and windows as quickly as they could—except for one little old lady standing in the center aisle.

With her cane in her hand, and shaking from head to toe, she said: "Mr. Devil, I don't know what you want here, but I've got only one thing to say. I've been a member of this church for forty years, but I've really been on your side all the time!"⁽¹⁸⁾

Whose "side" are you on? Who or what receives your primary loyalty in life? The first three commandments—the First Table of the Law—deal with our relationship to God. And we are to have no desire to worship another God. We want to worship Him only. We love Him! For He has

created us, and given us all that we have. Especially since He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—through whom we have become His children.

† † †

The Second Commandment
(God's Name)

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

A student walked out of a classroom and said to a friend: "God damn it—that was a hard test!" A Christian standing nearby heard the remark and quietly said: "You know, Norm, when you say 'God damn!' you should fold your hands and bow your head, because what you said was a prayer."

What a joy it is to reverence God's holy name! At times we may make the sign of the cross as we remember our baptism, and give an outward sign of our inner faith in the name of the Trinity. Or we may bow ourselves at the very mention of Jesus' name. (Cf. Phil. 2:10)

† † †

The Third Commandment
(God's Word)

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not

despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

A little girl noticed a dusty Bible on an end table in the living room. "Whose book is this, Mommy?" she asked.

"Oh, it's God's book," responded the mother, piously. "Well, we'd better send it back to Him then," she said, "because we're not using it."

What a privilege and blessing it is to worship regularly in God's house. And what a joy it is each day to come to that "sweet milk of the Word," with an open mind and a penitent heart, "that we may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:2)

The first three commandments, dealing with our love for God, are summed up by Christ's answer to the question as to which is "the first and great commandment": "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matt. 22:37)

Then comes the Second Table of the Law, concerning which Jesus said: "And the second is like unto it, you must love your fellow man as yourself." (Matt. 22:39) It was appropriate that the first three commandments dealt with our relationship with God. For we had a Maker to love before we had a neighbor to love. And only as we first love God do we have the grace from him to love other people.

† † †

The Fourth Commandment
(God's Representatives)

Honor your father and mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Obedience to God's authority is a mark of the new life in Christ. Imagine God is talking to you, much like He challenged some of the shaky, hesitant prophets of the Old Testament.

And the Lord said: "Go!"

And I said: "Who—me?"

And God said: "Yes,—you!"

And I said: "But I'm not ready yet. And there is company coming. And you know there's no one to take my place."

And God said: "You're stalling." Again the Lord said: "Go!"

And I said: "But I don't want to."

And God said: "I didn't ask if you wanted to."

And I said: "Listen I'm not the kind of person to get involved in controversy. Besides, my family won't like it. And what will the neighbors think?"

And God said: "Baloney." And yet a third time the Lord said: "Go!"

And I said: "Do I have to?"

And God said: "Do you love Me?"

And I said: "Look, I'm scared. People are going to hate me. And cut me up in little pieces (There are a lot of alligators out there!) I can't take it all by my- self." And God said: "Where do you think I'll be?"

And the Lord said: "Go!"

And I sighed: "Here I am, send me."⁽¹⁹⁾

God tells us to submit to authority. He, of course, is the One ultimately in control of our lives. But God places His other representatives over us as well: our parents, our supervisors or teachers, and the government. We are to obey these agents of His except when they require that of us which is displeasing to God. (Acts 5:29)

Our parents are particular blessings. Our elders are to be respected. God says: "Honor your father and your mother." What a privilege to do so even when they may have failed us as fallible, fellow human beings. For by God's grace they gave us life itself. And God adds a promise: "... that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you."

Even though no numerical promise of years is given here, God's promise in effect is that we shall live as long on earth as His infinite wisdom sees as good for us. And what days may seem to be cut short shall certainly abundantly be made up in heaven—that blessed place where we shall be forever—"with the Lord!" That He has promised us also!

† † †

The Fifth Commandment
(God's Gift of Life)

You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not

hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

How could I hurt my neighbor in any way if I want to love him or her as much as I respect myself and what is best for me?

The 1991 catechism is of particular help here in dealing with such contemporary issues as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. But the positive aspects of this commandment also call us not only to respect God's gift of life but to "help and support" our neighbor in every physical need.

A well-dressed European woman was on safari in Africa. The group stopped briefly at a hospital for lepers. The heat was intense, the flies buzzing. She noticed a nurse bending down in the dirt, tending to the pus-filled sores of a leper. With disdain the woman remarked, "Why, I wouldn't do that for all the money in the world!"

The nurse quietly replied, "Neither would I."⁽²⁰⁾

† † †

The Sixth Commandment
(God's Gift of Marriage)

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

A woman was celebrating her thirtieth wedding anniversary and was asked, "To what do you attribute the success of your long marriage?"

"That's easy," she replied. "We have so much in common. My husband and I have been in love with the same man for thirty years."⁽²¹⁾

Our relationship with others is not to be self-serving, but self-giving. As Peter Bertocci has said: "I am to 'catch God's vision' of the other person"—to help that individual to become the person God has in mind for them.

And that vision has particular application in this commandment in leading "a sexually pure and decent life" in relation to others. What a privilege it is to respect and honor another person as much as I would my own mother or father, my own sister or brother—my own son or daughter.

† † †

The Seventh Commandment
(God's Gift of Possessions)

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

Some high school students on a spree stole a blinking yellow sign from a construction

site. As they drove around town they tried to turn the light off, but could not do so. It kept blinking brightly, as if to say: "Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!" Fearful lest a policeman see the bright flashing light in their car, they finally returned the blinking sign to the construction site where they had stolen it.

You shall not steal. What pain and loss one goes through when precious things are stolen. And how sensitive and caring I should be helping protect my neighbor's possessions.

A clerk had one chicken left in an ice-packed barrel. When a customer asked for a chicken, the clerk pulled it out and said, "It weighs five pounds." "I want a bigger one," said the customer. "Oh, I have another one," said the clerk, who then put the chicken back in the barrel. Then he pulled out the same chicken and putting it on the scales, pressed down his thumb until it read seven pounds. "That's fine," said the customer. "I'll take both of them."⁽²²⁾

† † †

The Eighth Commandment
(God's Gifts of a Good Reputation)

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of

him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

As punishment for spreading evil stories about his friends, a little boy was told by his pastor to put a feather on every doorstep of the village. The boy fulfilled the task, and came back exhilarated. "Now go pick up each feather," said the pastor.

"But they will all have blown away!" cried the boy.

"It's too late!"

"Yes," said the pastor. "And so it is with your words. Once spoken, they cannot be brought back."⁽²³⁾

Have you ever had vicious gossip floating around about you which you could not track down? The Christian's words always pass through "three gates of gold": Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? The Christian in love wishes to defend and speak well of others and explain everything "in the kindest way."

A pastor overheard some laymen speaking of an absent friend. "He's unusual," said one. "He is different," said another. Several other men mentioned things to the person's discredit.

The pastor asked whom they were talking about. When they told him, he said, "Oh, yes. You are quite right. He is different. In fact... would you believe it? I've never known him to speak ill of an absent friend."

† † †

The Ninth Commandment
(God's Gift of Contentment)

*You shall not covet your
neighbor's house.*

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

A man bought a farm and soon after met his nearest neighbor. "Have you bought this place?" asked the neighbor? "Yes." "Well, you've bought a lawsuit." "How is that?" "Well, sir, I claim your fence down there is ten feet on my side of the line, and I'm going to take the matter to court and prove it." But the newcomer said, "Oh, no, you needn't do that. If the fence is on your side of the line, we'll just take it up and move it." For a moment the other man was puzzled. Then he said, "Do you really mean that?" "Why of course I do," came the answer. "Well, then," said the man, who a moment before had been so belligerent, "that fence stays right where it is!"

At times one is tempted to say: "Oh, I wish I had that person's house! I wish I had that person's spouse! I wish I had that person's estate!" But the New-Person-in-Christ says: "I don't really mean it, Lord. You have given me so much. And I don't want your gifts to me taken away from me.

I will not covet that which belongs to my neighbor."

† † †

The Tenth Commandment
(God's Gift of Contentment)

*You shall not covet your
neighbor's wife, or his manservant,
or maidservant, his ox or
donkey, or anything that belongs
to your neighbor.*

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

And that goes for everything which is not mine and which belongs to another. I thank you for all your gifts to me, O Lord. And because you are so gracious to me, I want to help my neighbor keep what is his or hers."

BREAKING THEM ALL

How close do we come to affirming these positive reflections on God's commandments? We have all failed to obey them. Or have we? Is there anyone who says: "Well, I haven't done too bad a job, after all"?

A campus pastor was calling on a brilliant Chilean graduate student at International House at the University of California in Berkeley. She had attended the chapel he served with some friends. When he visited with her, she recalled how she had tried to find God all her life, but without success.

Every night for nine years I read my Spanish Bible," she said, "and prayed for faith. But God never gave it to me."

Then, quietly, the pastor asked: "Did you ever pray for forgiveness?"

Then she commented that she had never broken any of the Ten Commandments. The pastor, intrigued, went through the commandments with her, starting, however, with the last.

No, she had never coveted. No, she had never stolen. No, she had never had an adulterous thought. No, she had never sworn, etc. Finally, they reached the First Commandment. "Is there anything—anything at all—," he asked, "which you would place before giving yourself wholly up to God?"

She paused wistfully. "I will have to say," and then she spoke firmly, "if anything, anything would come in the way of my pursuing my diplomatic career, it would have to go."

The tragedy in this instance was that this dynamic young woman was gradually going blind. But her real blindness was in not seeing the Savior who wanted to reach out and give her faith, but only as she received—having sought—forgiveness.⁽²⁴⁾

And the Scripture comes immediately to mind: "For whoever breaks only one command of the Law is guilty of breaking them all." (James 2:10)

It's not that we have done pretty well in keeping some of the commandments, and not too well with others. If we break one, we are guilty of all. And our commission of sin is not primarily against ourself or other people, but against God Himself. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned,"

says the Psalmist. The real dimension of sin is not horizontal—people against people—but first of all vertical, against God. It was our sins that nailed Christ to the cross. "You killed the Prince of Life," Peter told the crowd in the temple in the Book of Acts.(3:15)

So it is not true when someone says: "The church doesn't have to preach the law any more. People feel guilty enough. We can just go right to the Gospel."

Incorrect. Many people may "feel guilty" but they don't realize the full dimension of their sin—that it is against God, not their neighbor or themselves—and that vertical dimension of God's judgment has to be coped with.

CONCLUSION

And therein lies the challenge to the teacher of the Ten Commandments. The "Old Person" still needs to hear the indictment of the law, to repeat, knowing that God is continually being offended by sin.

But! The New-Person-in-Christ sees God and the ten Commandments differently—in a positive light.

Law: You can't fool God

Gospel: You don't have to. By the shed blood of Christ we are forgiven persons, in grace. Christ lives in us now! It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave His life for me.(Gal. 2:20)

So the Ten Commandments are not just "you shall not..." But they are now the ten joyful opportunities for loving service to God and my neighbor!

What a gracious and loving God we have! (25)✚

ENDNOTES

1. How many people say "To be a Christian is to keep the Ten Commandments!" Further, the American College Dictionary definition of fear is "a painful feeling of impending danger, evil, trouble, etc." The point of this monograph is not that the Old Man in the Christian does not have need to "fear" the wrath of God against the sin in one's life; but rather that such fear is not the impelling power for the new Person in Christ; rather, the Gospel is. It is a "filial" fear vs. a "servile" fear, as Walter A. Maier II notes in his *The Fear of God As Ethical Motivation in Pauline Theology* (Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, n.d.) His extensive study notes the many contrasting ways the word "fear" is used in Scripture.
2. *Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943) questions 31 and 32.
3. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991) questions 22A and B.
4. "Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18) Note how many times in Scripture angels greet humans with the first words: "Fear not!"
5. David P. Scaer, "Sanctification in Lutheran Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 49 (April-June, 1985) p., 185.
6. "Sin is 'contextualized,' guilt is denied, and forgiveness becomes an agreement to approve of one another as we are." *Lutheran Forum Newsletter*, August 10, 1988.
7. In this section I am indebted to my colleague David P. Scaer for insights from his article (supra).
8. 1991 catechism, op. cit., questions 24ff.

9. Scaer, op. cit., p. 184.
10. Ibid.,
11. Scaer, op. cit., p. 185.
12. 1991 catechism, question 77.
13. Scaer, op. cit., p. 185.
14. 1991 catechism, "The Close of the Commandments," p. 91.
15. Scaer, op. cit., p. 1987.
16. "Great Dangers Facing the Teacher and Preacher," by the author. *Lutheran Education*, September/October, 1991. Used by permission.
17. This and successive citings of the commandments and their explanation are from the 1991 catechism. Used by permission.
18. "The Devil and the Masquerade Ball," by the author in *The Possible Years: Thoughts After Thirty on Christian Adulthood* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973) p. 83.
19. By an anonymous student, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, ca. 1975.
20. Adapted from "The Life for Others," by the author, in *The Best of Your Life is the Rest of Your Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977), p. 91. Copyright by the author.
21. From Donald L. Deffner, *Seasonal Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc. 1992.
22. A story from Dan Clemons.
23. From the case study "I Like the Way You Walk," by the author, in *Ethical Decision-Making in the Parish: Eleven Issue Oriented Case Studies*. A Resource for Adult Education and Team Ministries. Unpublished MS.
24. *From Bound to be Free: The Quest for Inner Freedom by the author*. (Morse Press, 1981), p. 135.
25. Some of the material in the sections on "Do Your Own Thing" and "True Christian Freedom" and "A Positive Commandment" are from "Back to Basics: The Sixth Commandment," by the author, *Lutheran Witness*, March, 1982, pp. 70-71. Used by permission. Some material dealing with the "opportunities" of the Ten Commandments is adapted from "The Ten Commandments? You've Got to be Kidding!," by the author, *Concordia Pulpit* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), pp. 79-84. Used by permission.

Rachel Stohs
Verseemann

Reflections from the First Year



Dear Rachel,

I hope that you have passed through the Baptism of Fire into the system of Lutheran education and are enjoying your new career as a teacher. I am praying that the you will trust in the Lord's presence with you each day, giving you strength and wisdom for each situation. I hope the children are learning something from you... (letter from brother David)

It was August 26, 1991. My first year of teaching had begun. The faculty meetings were over and the children were on the way to my first classroom. I was excited and nervous at the same time. I had confidence that I was ready for anything that could happen.

I really didn't know what I was getting myself into when I accepted that first position, entered my first classroom, and went on the first home visit. Had they told me about everything that I would experience as a rookie teacher while I was still a college student, I definitely would have dropped out of the education program. I guess they didn't want to scare me away.

My first teaching experience was probably typical of many. Traumatic. Exhausting. Overwhelming. A year of Survival School. (Being alive and breathing at the first October Teachers' Conference was a major accomplishment!) I wondered if the children were progressing or regressing! But most of all, it was a year of learning. Learning that our teacher training was not over; it's just beginning. Learning that time management takes on a new

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meaning when 27 little children are involved. Learning where the lunchroom is from the child first in line on the first day. Learning that you rarely do on Friday what you have planned to do. Learning that your cooperating teacher isn't coming back up from her coffee break to teach the next lesson. Learning that recess is a heavenly gift from above, and rain at recess is a curse from below. Learning about people—principal, pastors, faculty, the custodian (get him as an ally!) and of course, children and their parents. In general, learning far more from the children than the children learned from me. Most important, learning that I had chosen one of the toughest yet rewarding careers in the world.

Where, then, do our undergraduate college experiences fit into this picture? Surely those four years had prepared me for teaching in some ways. I had stacks of notes, a book of orderly lesson plans, the ability to recite Piaget's stages of cognitive development backwards, and three boxes of hand-made math manipulatives. Why then, was the first year so difficult? Why did I go crying to the kindergarten room every day for a month? Why did I want to quit in September after the excitement and confidence of August? Why did I desperately want to catch an incurable disease? Why did I long to be back in college after wanting so desperately to graduate? Why did I have a recurring dream of being a check-out girl at Jewel?

I was a graduate of a very fine Education College! I had a Bachelor of Arts degree! I had a Lutheran Teacher Diploma! I should know how to do this!

Formal college experiences, time spent in the university classroom, both aided and abetted the initiation into the teaching arena. I learned about children and teaching from a strong theoretical point of view. I had courses in psychology which helped me to understand a child's developmental and thinking patterns. I examined many and various textbooks, curricula, and teaching aids. I wrote lesson plans, unit plans, and even had some "real-life" experiences with children through aiding and student-teaching.

On the other hand, many things I was told in college simply were incongruent with my first-year experience. Oh yes, we did have a full quarter of student teaching, but even then we had lots of time to plan and do fun stuff. Our cooperating teachers were ready to teach part of the day, and we were using someone else's tried and tested management system. I was told not to rely on basals and textbooks, yet found only these as guides in my first classroom. I knew that I would be required to assess learning and assign grades, but hadn't the slightest ideas about where to begin doing so. I knew about management and discipline, but little about their implementation. I knew how children were supposed to respond to me and to each other, but was unprepared for the wide variety of re-

sponses the children presented. Developing a positive relationship with the children's parents was a mystery to me. And I was used to having the time to strive for perfection in college, and expected the same of myself that first year.

College life was made complete through extra-curricular activities. I worked 20-plus hours each week, played on athletic teams, dabbled in music and had a part in the Children's Theater. With a busy schedule, I learned how to prioritize my time. These skills proved invaluable to me as a first-year teacher. But then I only had to take care of myself; I didn't have 27 little minds and their parents to concentrate on. I could get by with little sleep and be crabby the next day in college, but as a teacher I had to be ready with that smile in the morning, which was often forced. I could turn assignments in late and accept the consequences, but things were different with report cards. Numerous extra-curricular activities may have looked impressive on a transcript, but they translated into automatic qualifications for extra jobs at my new school, such as coaching, teaching gym classes, and helping out with various musical projects. Neither a full course-load nor student teaching (and playing basketball simultaneously) could come close to these time commitments!

They didn't tell me everything in college. They didn't tell me that sometimes, children cry. They didn't tell me that for some, my classroom is the only safe place

in their world. They didn't tell me that sometimes, I have to "stop the lesson to save the child," (Bill Halloran, 1993) and yes, I will have time to stop talking, to stop and listen.

In the four years of my college education, I wish several things would have happened to better prepare me for entrance into the teaching field. To begin, I could have used some instruction and practice on grading and other forms of assessment. I wanted to instill confidence in my children, yet demonstrate objectivity and fairness. I really did not know where to start. Strategies for building successful parent-teacher relationships (beginning with some ideas for home-visits) should also be learned and practiced in college. I'm sure that parents would be willing to sit on a panel and answer questions in a college class.

Next, a more practical approach to lesson planning would have been helpful. If I'm not supposed to use the basal reader or science textbook, what do I do instead when that is all that is in my room? The curriculum is full of black-line masters, and in college we were told to burn these worksheets! What does a first-year teacher do instead? Yes, I know that I should create meaningful learning experiences for the children in every subject area. When do I do that, and which subject should be more meaningful than the others? What should I do when many activities take longer than they should, and at the

same time other activities take less time than they should? How can I fit everything into my schedule?

Finally, I think students should spend more time with teachers in the community—watching, following, and imitating a wide variety of teachers. We need to learn about the many interactions teachers and children have that are not a part of the lesson plan. I wish that I had spent more time in a real classroom with real children in real learning situations, maybe through a longer period of student teaching (more like the internships of a business student). More opportunities need to be provided to practice classroom management and discipline, so that learned techniques can be adapted to fit an individual's teaching style. I am learning to be a teacher because I am one.

Nevertheless, I did make it through, even though I often didn't know how to do my job. I didn't quit. Some days I even felt good about myself. The custodian said I can come back. The children are doing great in the next grade. And I'm even in college again!

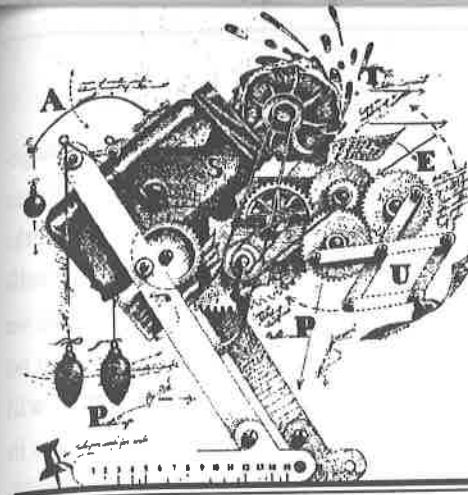
So how did I survive the baptism of fire? I had a good, solid, theoretical base of knowledge about education. I had some ideas about how I wanted things to be done, but learned to resign myself to the fact that I just couldn't do it all in one year. Extra-curricular responsibilities had somewhat prepared me for time management. But I feel the most important element of

my undergraduate experiences was the development of relationships with people who loved to teach. People who loved students, and loved to see them learn. People who were excited about education. These relationships became a network of supporters who believed in my potential to become an effective teacher; they were an inspiration to a struggling beginner. I wanted to be excited. I wanted to provide a loving environment for the children. I wanted to see them learn, just like my teachers wanted to see me learn. I survived because I loved the children.

The first year is over. Thankfully, I never will have to go through that again. The work isn't easier. There's even more to do. But it's different now. I made it through the first years, and knowing that I've done that gives me a new kind of confidence. Not the naive excitement I had at the beginning, but rather an inner assurance that I will be able to handle the demands of my job. I will continue to learn new things every day of this career; my training will probably never end. What a joy it is to have been called to such a dynamic, challenging career!

Dear Dave,

Yes, I made it. I'm far from being a master teacher, but I love my job. I'm often frustrated, but I can't give up. Yes, the Lord is with me, daily providing guidance. I love the children, and we teach each other. Love, Rachel✠



Steve Christopher

Time Management for Christian Leaders

In her book, *Why We Make Lists*, Caroline Knapp states there are two kinds of people in the world. Those who make lists and

those who do not. More than likely, if you are one of those people who make lists, you will be interested in this article. If you are not a listmaker then it is unlikely that you are even reading these words; you have probably moved on to another article. If by chance you are still reading, give this article a chance to speak to you. It is not like the typical time management articles that you might read in a business journal or in-flight magazine.

Although the title is *Time Management for Christian Leaders*, this is a misnomer. The content that will be explored will be that of self-management. The traditional practice of time management, where there is an emphasis on work place efficiency, will be challenged with a new model of personal effectiveness.

TIME MANAGEMENT VS. SELF-MANAGEMENT

The focus of much recent literature in the field of time use has been on managing time. Many have written about making the most of the hours available to bring about desired results of increased productivity, increase in earnings, or some kind of favorable numerical growth. A review of current time management resources would indicate a focus on:

- Efficiency—More output and more accomplishment in less time.
- Content—List of tasks to be completed, focus on what is to be done, priority listing of those tasks, elimination of unworthy or non-productive tasks.
- Volume—The quantity of work, how much there is to do, the management of what has to be accomplished.

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- **Getting**—The creation of extra time in one's work and life schedule in which to accomplish more and experience more.
- **Doing**—A focus on pace, on the many activities and tasks that are required in the home and the work place.

Literature abounds by secular and Christian authors that attempts to give answers to the question, "How can I get more done in less time?" In addition to the books that can be found, there are numerous workshops and time management programs that one can employ with the hoped for outcome of getting more accomplished with less investment of time.

This is all well and good. There is nothing wrong with being an efficient and productive person. The only problem is that it is limited to technique. Nearly all of the programs, books, and schedule makers designed to improve our use of time focus on the elimination of poor habits and the development of good habits. There are calendars, inventories, tickler files, meeting agendas, checklists, long-range and short-range task planners and much more, all in the name of technique. These are helpful. They do work for some, but they do not get at the heart of the matter. Although useful for a well balanced life, they are secondary.

A PROPER FOCUS

Rather than an emphasis on time management, an approach to developing more balanced living in the home and workplace should focus on the concept of self-management. The reality of life is that we cannot manage time. Time will go on no matter what we do with it. There will always be 24 hours in a day, 168 hours in a week, 12 months in a year, etc. Henry Dobson (1967) in the *Paradox of Time*, captures it well when he says, "Time goes, you say? Ah, no! Alas, time stays, we go."

The major difference between time management and self-management lies in the distinction between technique and concept. Technique is only valuable if there is theory to support it. Any truth in the techniques of time management lie in the concept of self-management. There is a distinct difference in the words and behaviors that describe the self-management approach, as opposed to the time management approach, in the guiding of one's personal life. Compare the following characteristics of self-management with the previous listing of items pertaining to time management.

- **Effectiveness**—Focus on choices which are goal directed and result in the accomplishment of purpose.
- **Intent**—Ask why something should be done rather than focus only on what should be accomplished.

- **Giving**—Ask: Am I offering my best? How can I serve? How can I contribute my gifts and abilities?
- **Value**—Give priority to work which is recognized by the quality of the job rather than the quantity of accomplishments.
- **Being**—Focus on purpose, directing attention to the heart of your life, your mission, your unique reason for involvement and activity.

Bob Shank (1990) gives a good understanding of the distinction between mere time management and self-management when he states:

"Well-managed days do not result in a well-managed life. Well-managed days are the result of a well-managed life."

A MODEL FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

Unlike other books on time management that focus mainly on techniques and ideas for a more efficient life, Roger Merrill (1989) presents a conceptual model that places all of life's activities into one of four quadrants.

The first quadrant represents those things that are important and urgent. As a Lutheran educator experiencing Quadrant I, you might encounter the irate parent of a child who has to talk with you now! A last minute driver canceling before a field trip or youth event, or the expiration of the copy machine just before you need to make copies for a class or important meet-

ing. This quadrant is unavoidable. No technique will prevent the inevitable from happening. There will always be deadlines, projects that need to be completed in a timely manner, and untimely crises.

Quadrant III is the phantom of Quadrant I. It includes activities that are urgent, but not important. It creates a "busy-ness" atmosphere in which there is much to be done. However, the actual activities that one is involved in are not of a critical nature, they are simply not that important. The sense of urgency, usually on the part of others, creates in us the feeling that there is much that is important. For the Lutheran educator, Quadrant III activities might include the following: drop-in visitors who just have to see you now, invitations to a variety of meetings where your input is sought, questionnaires to publishing firms, surveys requested by the District Office, social activities of the school and parish that request your participation.

Quadrant IV is the place we encounter those activities that are not important and not urgent. It is the quadrant of busy work. It is not asked of us by others nor is it of personal significance. Not even leisure activities and recreation are included in this quadrant. For the Lutheran educator, Quadrant IV activities might include going through old catalogs for no apparent

reason, reviewing junk mail, "mindless" television viewing, engaging in gossip and other unconstructive discussions.

Concluding our counterclockwise trip around the model we find Quadrant II. This is the quadrant of quality. This is where we experience those activities that are important, but not urgent. This is the quadrant that increases our connecting power and ability to do our ministry. This is where true joy in service is experienced. This is where you feel empowered to fulfill your calling. Activities of Quadrant II for the Lutheran educator might include personal Bible study, family devotion, the reading of a good novel or other intellectually stimulating book, taking a vacation, lunch with a colleague or good friend, planning of the work week, long range ministry planning, graduate studies, time with family, the writing of a letter to an old college friend, and so much more!

Quadrant II is the quadrant of self-management. The other three are quadrants of time management. Techniques can and may improve the situation in one of the other quadrants, but they will never move you into Quadrant II.

TIMELY TIPS FOR LIVING AND WORKING IN QUADRANT II

Understanding the concepts of Quadrant II and operationalizing them are two dif-

ferent things. There is no guarantee that when you wake up each morning, or when you enter your office or classroom that you will yourself be in Quadrant II. It takes a keen sense of personal awareness as well as an understanding of what is going on around you, to know which quadrant you are operating in. It also requires some strong principles and active behaviors to keep you focused on Quadrant II. The goal is not only to operate in Quadrant II but to expand it in your life and ministry, and thus, reduce the size of the other three quadrants. Here are ten suggestions.

HOW TO PLAN TIME TO PLAN

Take the beginning of your day in the office to plan your daily activities or better yet, take the last ten minutes of a work day to plan for the coming day. Planning and preparation take time. Make sure you allow time for this important activity, for it is one of the most critical things you can do to help maintain Quadrant II living.

HOW TO MAKE USE OF TIME ZONE SCHEDULING

Set aside blocks of time to work uninterrupted. Grade those papers away from the home and classroom. Allow no appointments two afternoons a week, and use that time for reading and study. Tackle those big projects by allowing yourself a size-

able chunk of time to focus on the challenges that confront you.

HOW TO NEVER SCHEDULE MORE THAN 50% OF YOUR TIME

Most time management thinkers find this suggestion absurd; most self-management practitioners understand its practicality. It is true that activity expands to fill the time available, and then some. Ever been to a dentist or doctor and get in on time, exactly when you were scheduled? Not many of us have. That is because many of these offices will schedule 100% of the day, leaving little room for surprises and the possibility that some appointment may take longer than anticipated.

HOW TO FOCUS ON SPECIFICS

Lily Tomlin once said, "I always wanted to be somebody, but I guess I should have been more specific." Generalities get us no where. It is the specific question that focuses learning. It is a specific goal that helps direct an organization in a new direction. It is specific intentional behavior that keeps us in Quadrant II.

HOW TO UNCLUTTER YOUR LIFE

This isn't just a suggestion to become a '90s Felix Unger. Neatness isn't the point here. The point is to eliminate those items from Quadrant III that fill up so much of

the day. If your desk, office or classroom is a posterchild for Quadrant III, unclutter it! Unclutter your schedule. Eliminate those needless meetings and activities from your life, and move toward Quadrant II.

HOW TO PRACTICE "WON'T POWER"

Saying no on occasion can be a wonderful way to remain in Quadrant II. Saying no may be seen as offensive and self-serving by some and give others a great case of the guilts. Learn to say no to Quadrant III & IV requests so that you can say yes to Quadrant II requests.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR COMMITMENTS

Nothing creates greater character in a person than being a person of your word. It starts with the simple things, like keeping appointments and being on time for them. It is following through on projects that you have undertaken. It is living out your personal mission. It is performing your most important duties in the public arena, as well as the simplest of tasks and responsibilities that may only be seen by a few.

HOW TO KEEP A "PERHAPS" LIST

It could be a file of things you want to do in your classroom someday. It could be a list of ideas to do with your youth group or faculty. It might be a book to read, a movie to see, a place to visit. Keep it handy, keep

it nearby, because in Quadrant II, you will find the time to get to it.

HOW TO ALLOW FOR VARIETY AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

Try new activities and experiences to enrich your life and ministry. It could be something as big as writing to the Mission Department of synod and offer your services as an overseas educational missionary for a period of time. It could be going back to school to earn that graduate degree, it could be taking guitar lessons at age 46, it could be giving a children's message for the first time. While vanilla and chocolate are very good, they are only two flavors. We live in a 31 flavors kind of world. Try something different, try something new! You will benefit from it, and so will those with whom you share in life and ministry.

HOW TO START STRONG AND FINISH STRONG

There is always much creativity and excitement at the beginning of a school year, at the beginning of a retreat, at the beginning of VBS, at the beginning of a Bible study series. The end of any such event

should be the same. No doubt, it is harder to be "up" or as excited at the end as you were at the beginning. There is fatigue. There is pain. There needs to be a compulsion for closure. Save a burst of energy for the finish just as a 400 meter runner does, who has given their best throughout the entire race, but still saves the best for last.

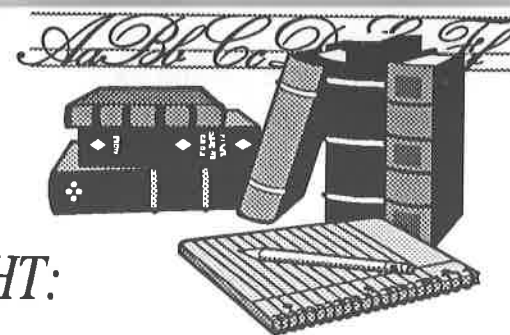
CONCLUSION

The more effective life, the more enriched life, the more relaxing life is not found in the application of techniques to an already busy and erratic lifestyle. True self-management and good stewardship of time is found in purposeful living. Self-management doesn't come easy, sometimes it requires the changing of old ways, but if done with purpose in mind, it will set the stage for a new perspective on life and ministry. Self management is a gift we give to ourselves in response to the gift of time God has given us, and in so doing, give service to others and glory to God.✚

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Robert Baden



Let there be DE-LIGHT:

The teaching of creative writing

In the beginning God created the people and their words. But their writing was lifeless and empty, and boredom was on the face of the people. And God said, "Let there be delight," and there was delight. And God saw that it was very good.

Well, maybe Genesis doesn't really begin exactly that way, but this paraphrase can serve to introduce the concept of creativity, which this article really is about more than just the teaching of creative writing. Without creativity, there can be no creative writing and certainly no teachers of creative writing. Creativity is a gift of God, a sharing by the Creator with His creation of one of the essences of God Himself. Our God is a creative God, and as creatures made in His image we possess His model of creativity as an inspiration for our own approach to teaching and to living.

Just what is "creativity"? Some common synonyms are insight, imagination, intuition, uniqueness, vision, inventiveness, etc. One definition might be "the ability to see what isn't there." In this sense, creativity sounds very much like "faith" as defined in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Even faith, the bedrock of our salvation, requires a creative mind to leap beyond the apparent realities of life and death into a confidence that what God has done is true and what He promises us will come to pass. A non-creative, purely logical person resists both and demands proof where none exists this side of eternity.

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God needs creative Christian teachers, ones who can look beyond the dirty faces, struggling speech, disinterested behavior, and apparent hopelessness of young people with an imagination/faith that they can learn and will be used by a God who knows their futures and is waiting for us to prepare them as best we can for Him.

One of the many ways we prepare them is through creative writing. "Creative writing" is an unfortunate choice of words, though, since it implies that there must also be "uncreative writing" or at least this lies in the minds of many students and a good number of teachers. Such an attitude tends to divide writing into the "fun kind"—poetry, stories, drama, free expression—and "the other kind"—reports, essays, research, structured expression.

The truth is that anytime we write, we are writing creatively. If that were not the case, every report on France would be identical, every essay on preserving our forests would contain the same arguments, every research assignment would draw from the same sources and reach the same conclusions. Only blatant copying from a text or allowing a computer to generate something for us lies outside the realm of creative writing, and many would argue that even computer writing requires cre-

ative input to enable random output that seems to make sense.

Our approach to teaching writing of any kind, then, begins with the premise that every act of writing is a creative act. If so, young writers need to feel far more free than they usually do when they begin to write a book report or an essay or even a story that they may view as dull and feel untouched by creative juices.

Our job as teachers requires us to erase the attitude that writing is boring or threatening or impossible to do well. A love of writing—or at least a lessened fear of it—begins with the realization that the writer, not language, is the master of the situation. Words do not control the writer; a writer controls words. That realization is at the heart of creative writing. When writers realize that words are flexible, pliable, and adaptable, they begin to see potential for new uses, new meanings, new arrangements. In other words, writing becomes a creative opportunity.

HOW TO BEGIN

Beginning with words is often more productive than beginning with complete stories or essays or other finished products. Helping children enjoy the sounds and meanings of language starts the journey toward delight. Asking children to write

several sentences using a different meaning of "run" will open their eyes to the versatility of individual words. Asking children to change "walked" in the sentence "He walked down the street" to a more specific means of "walking" will result in "limped," "staggered," "hopped," "strolled," and aid both vocabulary development and specificity in writing. Even a simple exercise like using the letters of the word "educational" to form as many other words as possible encourages a change in attitude toward language and writing.

Perhaps the richest soil for writing that is both enjoyable and beneficial is children's literature. With the growing acceptance of whole language, teachers have been given the opportunity to encourage children to write in response to quality literature and to allow it to spill over into other subject areas that can be related to the story being read. Hence, Dr. Seuss' *The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*, for example, becomes more than a chance to have the students write new rhymes for the magicians, or letters from Bartholomew to his parents, or an episode in dramatic form, or a description of a character, or an interview with the king, or an explanation why the "hat law" was good or bad. It also leads to activities like writing out directions

from Bartholomew's home to the king's castle, how a history book might report this event, an argument for equal rights for all people, a report on the history of magic, or a new story based on a similar kind of magical occurrence.

ANOTHER STRATEGY

Poetry is another kind of literature that has rich potential for use in student writing. While most young children love to hear and to experiment with poetry, older ones often have some misconceptions about it. For example, many believe that poetry must rhyme, that it's only about "pretty" things, and that nothing ever happens in poetry. Teachers can quickly dispel these misconceptions by reading regularly from the works of Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky. Once children realize they like poetry and that it can be fun, they can be given many opportunities to try it out.

Unfortunately, some teachers throw children into poetry with little preparation, which can result in rather lifeless lines that may rhyme but really do little else. Poetry writing requires experiences to respond to, such as taking a class outside in spring to see and hear and smell and touch and even taste the change from winter to spring. A listing of these sensory moments and a few minutes of talking

about them can result in writing that moves beyond the senses into the soul of the child.

Children are also capable of handling some of the structured forms of poetry and should have the chance to experiment with them. Haiku and cinquain are both simple and popular with young writers and can result in some quality efforts. Students respond to "shaped verse," also known as concrete poetry, in which the appearance of the poem on the page resembles the subject of the poem: "Tree," "Field Goal," "Truck," "Thunderstorm," etc. Some older students may respond to more traditional forms, such as the limerick, ballad, or even the sonnet.

Another good source of writing ideas is fiction. Most children like to write stories, but most benefit from some direction or a place to start. Otherwise, their products tend to ramble on a narrative journey that never seems to end or to have a real purpose. Stories modeled after ones read in class, such as folk stories or *Just So* stories often get creative juices flowing. The recent appearance of new "versions" of old fairy tales, such as *The Three Little Pigs* from the wolf's point of view, the continuation of the story of the Frog Prince, and the rewrite of the Gingerbread Boy

called *The Stinky Cheese Man*, might inspire some to rewrite other such stories.

Very helpful are a collection of "story starters," located perhaps in a corner of the room for those students who have finished their other work and want to write. These can be used individually or with the entire class as a regular writing activity and include such things as the following:

- 1) Write a story that includes as many product names as possible (Dash, Cheer, Squirt, Charmin, etc.) used in their usual sense: "I cheer for joy when I squirt you and dash away." "One Irish spring at dawn, Farmer John awoke to sunlight."
- 2) Take a dollar bill and write its life story in the first person. "I was born one green morning in 1990 in the Denver mint and was named ZXR1382746."
- 3) Write a story in which "Isn't" and "Ain't" argue about who is right and who is wrong. Use lots of dialog.
- 4) Write a "Curious George" story, like "Curious George Goes to Church." Just as fiction and poetry encourage children's writing, so does drama. Any other form of writing can be turned into drama, once children realize that the entire story must be carried through dialog (and a few stage directions that only the actors read). Drama is special because the author can select classmates to "perform" the script as a culminating activity. All stories, including Bible stories, are potential sources of drama. Drama can enhance both Tom Sawyer's adventures and the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac or the story of the Good Samaritan.

BEYOND TRADITIONAL TYPES

But the potential for creative writing goes far beyond these traditionally creative types. Opportunities abound for having students encounter a variety of writing types, such as interview, letter writing, biography or autobiography, description, persuasion, and explanation. One problem with these types is that they are most frequently assigned as a result of a chapter in a language arts textbook and as such are usually perceived as evidence that language arts means irrelevant kinds of writing unrelated to anything else that is happening in the classroom.

Any teacher or group of teachers can devise a grid with the kinds of writing they want students to encounter during a year listed across the top and the different curricular areas listed down the side. If teachers look for opportunities for writing assignments at the points of intersection, they will succeed in providing opportunity to write all the types, practice writing across the curriculum, and dispel the notion that writing is something that happens only in language arts. Since each writing experience will be motivated by an appropriate stimulus from the different curricular areas, the chances for irrelevance go down considerably. Opportunities such as "Write a letter ordering science equip-

ment for the lab," "Explain how to use quotation marks," "Argue for or against saying 'It is I,'" "Do an imaginary interview with a professional athlete," or "Describe the Spanish mission that we visited" start appearing. Creative teachers, freed from the belief they must do things in the same way they always have, will find new and better ways to do them.

A critical element of the classroom writing experience is the sharing and/or publication element. Teachers need to find ways to feed the natural desire of children (and adults) to be recognized by their peers. Too often we inadvertently diminish pleasure with comments like, "This is a good story, but..." followed by a list of shortcomings. Our goal may be perfection, but neither we nor the children will ever be perfect. Children aren't adults, and perhaps we need to quit judging third graders by adult standards. We lower basketball goals to seven feet for four-foot tall children, but we never say, "This word is spelled very well for a third-grader." Perhaps we need a kind of "developmental correctness," recognizing movement toward perfection and not only failure to reach it. Perhaps it is better for a child to spell the precise word for an occasion incorrectly than to spell correctly a more common word.

THE NEED TO SHARE

In any case, we need to allow for sharing with others. Giving children time to share their stories may get old for the teacher, but for the child on the stage at the moment, it's just right. A wonderful thing about children reading their own stories is that no misspelled words or run-on sentences are evident. As children grow in confidence and learn how to be satisfied with and take ownership for their work, they tend to be far more ready to listen to and even seek assistance with mechanical matters, especially if they know their story will be on the board on Parents' Night. The ways to share student writing in addition to having them read are endless, such as:

- 1) Xerox your story for inclusion in the class literary journal.
- 2) Decorate your poem and send it to a senior citizen.
- 3) Enter your story in a children's writing contest.
- 4) Perform your play for the first graders.

In spite of successes, times of uncertainty will come. Unlike God's creation, our efforts to create are not always very good. One uncertainty will dawn on those days when the children don't feel like writing. Or something will occur on the way to school that makes writing unimportant, at least the writing the teacher had planned to have the children do. These are normal occurrences. Certainly a change in writing activity to take advantage of the

birth of kittens to someone's cat is in order, but so also is the decision not to write for a day or more. Sooner or later, if writing has become an exciting and interesting part of the classroom activity, the students will miss it and actually ask for its return. Creativity needs a break now and then. Even God took a rest after six days of creating. Teachers who are always looking for new ideas and new approaches to writing will find these momentary losses of energy infrequent.

WHAT ABOUT GRADING?

Another uncertainty deals with the amount of grading and finding the time to do it. When students are doing as much writing as is possible with what has been said here, it would be impossible to read carefully and grade all of it. One possible solution suggests that students can be asked every week to choose the one piece of writing they like best from the several they have written, perfect it as best they can, and submit this piece for a grade. Teachers may wish to read everything a student writes, especially if the students want them to, but certainly not all of it needs to be graded. In the process of keeping their sanity, teachers help students learn self-evaluation.

A third uncertainty comes with deciding what the teacher should be doing while children are writing. One thing they should not do is spend the time writing lesson plans or grading papers. Children

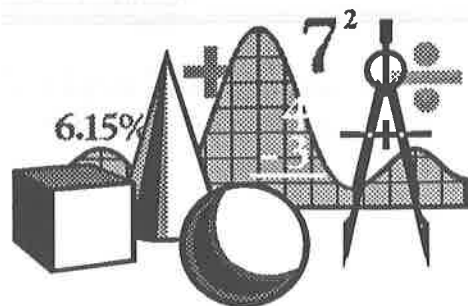
will quickly conclude that writing is busy work given so that the teacher can do something more important. Nor should teachers submit to the temptation to respond to the increasingly frequent requests for assistance with spelling or some other kind of guidance during the initial writing stage. While students may feel uncertain without immediate access to the teacher, the absence of this kind of "crutch" creates a situation more like writing really is. Students are forced to work on their own and can focus better under that condition. In fact, students should be discouraged even from using a dictionary during the initial writing process so that they don't lose their creative flow. We need to teach the difference between the composing stage—when we write—and the editing stage—when we change, correct, proof-read, polish, and get assistance from every source possible such as other students, writing handbooks, and the teacher.

All things considered, the best thing teachers can do while the students are writing is also to write. While teachers could legitimately write other kinds of things, the class will benefit most if they write the same thing they have asked the class to write. Teachers should not pretend they are children, though, and "write like a child." They should write as themselves and do the best they can with the same task the children have.

Assuming that teachers are successful with some of these ideas or with those they have gathered on their own, they will also be tempted to become evangelists of writing in their school. There's nothing wrong with evangelizing within reason, but too much can "turn off" rather than "turn on." Chances are that if children are doing exciting things with writing in their class, the word will get around to other teachers through their students.

In addition, all teachers can continue to learn about writing and to try new ideas. They can take classes or workshops devoted to the subject. They can look for ways to integrate writing into the other subjects in their classroom, and they can read teachers' magazines and attend and speak at teachers conferences. And there is no reason why teachers with a good idea about writing cannot write and submit an article to a professional journal. Success in doing so will be a direct benefit to their classroom and school as they seek to convince students and colleagues that writing is important—and perhaps even profitable.

But perhaps most important of all, teachers need to determine that in their classroom at least, the prevailing attitude toward writing will be, "Let there be delight!" Once that commitment is made, exciting possibilities pop up from all directions. ✚



Kenneth Mangels
*Mathematics
Education in*

LCMS Elementary and Middle Schools

Part I. Mathematics Achievement and Pedagogical Activities

INTRODUCTION

National assessments of the American educational system, and in particular mathematics education, have been conducted periodically during the last twenty years. Most prominent are the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP). These two assessments, along with other traditional standardized tests, have painted a deteriorating image of the American students' mathematics abilities and lend support to the belief that our schools in general are not doing an adequate job. These indictments appear to implicate all institutions of education, both public and nonpublic. Research has shown that public and nonpublic schools are not alike in other ways, yet little research has occurred which deals specifically with the assessment of mathematics education in the nonpublic schools.

This study was done to assess mathematics education in the LCMS elementary and middle schools of the Pacific Southwest (PSW) district. This district includes LCMS schools in southern California, southern Nevada and Arizona. Data analysis included fourth and eighth grade student achievement in mathematics.

In addition, the pedagogical milieu of the mathematics classrooms was examined from both the student's and the teacher's perspective. The analysis focused on identifying whether

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or not these (LCMS) data were consistent with the 1990 NAEP background questionnaire results, and whether or not the data were in alignment with the national recommendations as outlined in the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics (1989).

Student achievement in mathematics was analyzed by comparing the mean raw scores of 1,312 fourth and 820 eighth grade students within the Pacific Southwest district of The LCMS to the normative data of the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Eighth Edition. For the analysis of the classroom activities, samples of 179 fourth grade students and 143 eighth grade students were randomly selected from the participating LCMS schools in the PSW district. The students completed a questionnaire modeled after a similar instrument used in the 1990 NAEP assessment.

Collected data included the frequency with which certain instructional activities occurred, such as the students' use of textbooks, worksheets, manipulatives, small group activities, calculators and computers. In addition, 44 fourth grade teachers and 37 eighth grade teachers were selected from the participating elementary and middle schools and asked to complete a questionnaire. Like the students, the teachers were asked the frequency

with which certain instructional activities occurred in their classrooms as well as pertinent questions about their mathematics curriculum.

MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

All participating schools in the PSW district administer the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Eighth Edition, to all students at all grade levels using the PSW district's data. This study showed that the fourth and eighth mean raw scores in the Stanford Achievement mathematics subtests of Concepts of Number, Mathematics Computation, Mathematics Application and Thinking Skills were significantly greater than the normative data as determined by Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, authors of the Stanford Achievement Test Series.

While the Stanford Achievement Testing program assessment included both public and nonpublic schools, most of the students were from the public school sector. Therefore, these results were not surprising since past research has shown that nonpublic students tend to score higher on achievement tests than their public school counterparts (Hannaway & Abramowitz, 1985; Kraushaar, 1972; Lee & Stewart, 1989).

However, the degree to which the PSW students performed better than those students in the Stanford national norming sample in mathematics achievement remained uncertain. While the PSW mean

scores were found to be significantly greater than the normative means, these results were tempered somewhat since the actual differences between the scores were relatively small, i.e., most of the mean raw scores differed from the norm scores by only one to three points. Yet, these differences were found to be statistically significant due to the large sample sizes.

Further analysis of the PSW fourth grade achievement data in the Thinking Skills and Mathematics Applications provided some interesting results. At both grade levels, greater differences were found between the PSW students' mean raw scores and the Stanford normative means in those subtests which required high level analytical thinking abilities. Consequently, these results seem to suggest PSW students showed an increase in their thinking and problem solving abilities without an equivalent increase in their computational skills.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

Results from the Stanford Achievement data and the demographics data showed that both fourth and eighth grade students in the PSW district who live with non-divorced parents scored higher on their Total Math score than those students who live with divorced parents. These differences were more apparent in the eighth grade where students with divorced par-

ents scored, on the average, 51.8 in Total Math mean raw score while students with non-divorced parents scored on the average 61.1.

PSW district's students who watched four or more hours of television per day scored lower than those students who only watched one hour or less. Again, the differences found in the Total Math mean raw scores between these two groups were more evident in the eighth grade: 1 hour or less of TV, average Total Math score was 62; 4 or more hours of TV, average score was 53. The results of the 1990 NAEP assessment also supported this same inverse relationship between hours of TV watched and student achievement in mathematics.

One final interesting note: in the 1990 NAEP assessment, both fourth and eighth grade students who read over 10 pages during the school day had a higher proficiency score in mathematics than those students who had read less than 10 pages per day. In the PSW district, similar results were found in the fourth grade but not in the eighth grade. On the average, PSW eighth grade students who had read 11-15 pages scored higher in Total math than those who had read 20 or more pages during the school day.

It was also interesting to note that the more prolific fourth and eighth grade readers in the PSW were not the ones who

scored the highest in the Thinking Skills subtest. Students who read approximately 15 pages during the school day had the highest mean raw score, even higher than those students who had read more than 20 pages a day. [This is just a sample of the demographic statistics found from this study. If you are interested in seeing the complete statistics on the PSW demographics, please contact the author at Concordia University Irvine.]

PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES

For this part of the study, comparisons between the PSW schools and the NAEP sample schools were done regarding the amount of instructional time in mathematics, the amount of mathematics homework, the use of calculators and computers in the mathematics classroom, and the frequency with which textbooks, worksheets, small group activities, manipulatives, and testing and written reports/projects are used in the classroom. In addition, the amount of instructional emphasis by the PSW and NAEP teachers on the various mathematical content areas was also analyzed.

MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION

Nationally, the average length of mathematics instruction in the fourth grade was found to be greater in the NAEP sample than in the PSW sample, with the majority of the NAEP teachers indicating an in-

structional time of more than 45 minutes. In the eighth grade, the NAEP teachers reported much diversity of practice with no apparent consensus on the most appropriate length of instructional time. The most frequent length of instructional time for mathematics, as reported by the PSW fourth and eighth grade teachers, was between 31 and 45 minutes.

MATHEMATICS HOMEWORK

The findings were inconclusive in determining if fourth and eighth grade students in the PSW samples were assigned more homework than those from the NAEP study. From the teachers' perspective in both studies, eighth graders in the PSW sample appeared to have more homework in mathematics than those in the NAEP sample. However, these findings were not corroborated by the students' data. The majority of students in both studies reported they were assigned 15 to 30 minutes of homework regardless of grade level.

CALCULATORS AND COMPUTERS

More NAEP fourth and eighth grade students were found to have accessibility to school-owned calculators than their PSW counterparts. The students' use of calculators in mathematics was also found to be more prevalent in eighth grade than in the fourth grade, especially within the PSW samples. In general, the students and teachers from both studies and across both

grade levels reported calculator usage was limited. In addition, the evidence from both studies indicated few fourth and eighth grade students were given unrestricted use of calculators during mathematics class.

Both studies found most fourth and eighth grade mathematics teachers had computers available to them. However, many of the teachers also indicated a problem of accessibility for instruction. Nevertheless, the students and teachers from both studies and both grade levels indicated computers were used infrequently during mathematics instruction. Computer use in both studies was found to be more prevalent in the fourth grade than in the eighth grade.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

While both studies found fourth and eighth grade teachers highly dependent upon their mathematics textbooks for instructional exercises, the data also showed PSW teachers across both grade levels even more dependent than their national counterparts. Worksheets were used regularly in both the NAEP and PSW fourth grades. In the eighth grade, however, the students reported less use of worksheets, especially within the PSW samples.

Conflicting reports were given regarding the use of small group activities in mathematics. In the NAEP study, small group activities occurred more often in the fourth grade classrooms than in the eighth grade. However, in the PSW study, just

the opposite was true with LCMS eighth graders reporting more experiences with small group activities.

The PSW and NAEP teachers and students were not in agreement over the frequency of small group activities in mathematics. While the NAEP and PSW fourth and eighth grade teachers reported frequent use of small group activities during mathematics instruction, the fourth and eighth grade students from both studies reported limited experiences with small group activities.

Similar to this study's findings on small group activities, The PSW and NAEP fourth and eighth grade teachers reported a greater use of manipulatives than did the students. However, although both studies showed manipulatives were used infrequently during mathematics instruction, they did appear to be used more often in the fourth grade. Limited inventories of manipulatives were reported by the PSW fourth and eighth grade teachers, even though the majority of them had indicated they were able to get all or most of the resources they needed.

Teachers and students from both studies agreed few eighth grade students were expected to complete a project or some form of written assignment in mathematics. Periodic testing was found to be quite frequent in mathematics, more so in the NAEP samples.

In both studies and across both grade levels, the data confirmed that learning

mathematical facts, concepts and procedures was still given a high priority in the mathematics curriculum. In addition, the study of whole numbers and whole number operations dominated the elementary curriculum, especially in the PSW samples. More fourth and eighth grade NAEP teachers than PSW teachers reported placing a higher priority on the importance of teaching analytical thinking and communication skills in mathematics.

The majority of PSW fourth and eighth grade teachers indicated placing a heavy to moderate emphasis on problem solving. Yet, by contrast, a high proportion of the students reported problem solving activities occurred less than once a week.

CONCLUSION

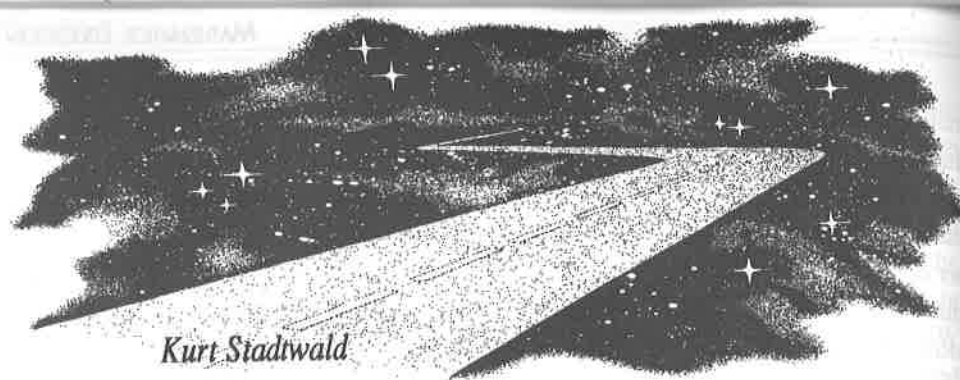
While the study found that the fourth and eighth grade mathematics students in PSW samples scored significantly higher in mathematics achievement, the practical differences between the mean raw scores of the students in the PSW and NAEP samples were not large. Hence, the degree to which the PSW students outperformed their counterparts nationwide remains questionable. In addition, the study found that the frequency of certain pedagogical activities within the PSW samples were generally not consistent with the mathematical activities found in the fourth and eighth grade classrooms nationwide. No specific patterns of inconsistency were found between the two studies. Some

mathematical activities were found to be more prevalent in the NAEP classrooms, while others occurred with more frequency in the PSW classrooms.

Part II of this series on Mathematics Education in The LCMS Schools will look at how the frequency of mathematical activities in the PSW classrooms align themselves with the NCTM's Standards (1989).✚

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Luther's Mouth and Modern Sensibilities

(or Why Couldn't Luther Keep a Civil Tongue?)

By just about any standard, people in public life today carry out their disagreements with extraordinary courtesy. Recall last fall's presidential campaign, that swiftly receding event, if you do not believe me. Many wagged a finger at the then President George Bush for his claim, more silly than vicious, that his dog knew more about how the world worked than candidate Bill Clinton, who also happened to be a "Bozo." Of course, those who teach at colleges and universities must also be aware of the "political correctness" of what they say and how they say it. Oral hygiene these days means much more than brushing and flossing.

The aim of these remarks, however, is not to complain but to explain that such high standards of public conduct did not apply to the era in which Martin Luther wrote. As simple as this observation may seem, there are many people, inside the Lutheran movement and out of it, who are ashamed of and aghast by what Luther publicly stated about those whom he utterly opposed, especially the popes and the Jewish people. Luther's critics have used his declarations about his enemies to brand him with a number of charges ranging from near-insanity to near-nazism. But before any would make those charges again, let them consider Luther's far different circumstances and point of view.

The study of Luther's "rhetorical violence," as one historian called it, has arisen out of the Jekyll and Hyde view of the reformer's career. Today most historians routinely divide his

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life into "Young" and "Old." The Young Luther is the Luther with whom most are acquainted. He is the revolutionary who defied authorities in the name of what he firmly believed to be true Christianity. His crowning achievement was the German translation of the Bible. The Old Luther is the crusty, physically declining Luther, who grew increasingly impatient with anyone refusing to accept the authority of statements which today would be considered morally repugnant, or at least regrettable.

A good example of the Old Luther's incendiary pamphleteering is one of the last things that Luther wrote before his death in early 1546. Entitled *Against the Roman Papacy Founded by the Devil* (1545), the pamphlet features several woodcut prints from the hand of the eminent artist Lukas Cranach the Elder, featuring scenes of the popes' alleged tyranny and eliciting the angry response it should provoke from good Lutheran Germans. One print shows the pope being taken by demons, depicted as winged serpents, into Hell, the flaming mouth of a dragon. Luther's caption in rhyming German declares the pope to be the antichrist.

Another one pictures the pope and three cardinals being hung, with demons carrying off their souls as they die. The

pope's tongue has also been cut off and is being nailed above him on the scaffold. (The loss of the tongue was the penalty for those convicted of blasphemy.) Luther's Latin caption reads: "Just Retribution for the Most Satanic Pope and his Cardinals." It is these statements, and worse ones, which have led some historians to claim that Luther poisoned himself with his own hatred of Catholicism, and prompted some ecumenically-minded theologians to call on the Lutherans to recant this portion of Luther's written legacy.

Luther's later remarks about the Jews have also made him a dark figure in that tradition. Young Luther in 1523 wrote *That Jesus Was Born a Jew* in which he advised "that one deal gently with them [the Jewish people] and instruct them from the Scripture...instead of...trying only to drive them by force, slandering them, accusing them of having Christian blood if they don't stink, and I know not what other foolishness." When gentle instruction failed to convert Jews to Lutherans in mass numbers, Old Luther changed his mind.

Out of the rambling about the alleged crimes of the Jewish people and their spiritual poverty which make up *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), critics have

often quoted a short excerpt in which Luther laid out a program of persecution:

1. Burn synagogues and bury anything that will not burn,
2. burn Jewish homes so that they must live in the open as Gypsies,
3. destroy their religious writings,
4. make Jewish preaching a capital crime,
5. deny them police protection on highways and when conducting business, and
6. abolish their right to lend money for interest to Christians.

Living after the Holocaust, that nearly inconceivable assembly-line destruction of millions of Jews in the early years of the 1940s, more than a few have found in Luther's words here a historical explanation for Nazism's success in Germany. In short, it is alleged that Luther planted the seeds of hatred which slowly grew over the next four hundred years into the politics of race and fear and genocide.

How are Lutherans to come to grips with the sinister opinions of their founder? Is Luther to be convicted out of his own mouth? Perhaps, but there are, as always, a number of possible responses. My position is that an ounce of explanation outweighs as much moralism as one can wish to heap. I am not suggesting that anyone should candy-coat what Luther had to say either about the officials of the Catholic Church or the Jews. He detested both and

expressed his white-hot hatred graphically and repeatedly.

Nevertheless, we ought to recognize that our towering standards of correct public expression did not exist in the sixteenth century. The newly invented printing press in the Reformation era was as revolutionary to public communication then as the word processor has proved for this generation. Reformation writers realized the potential of the press for mass communication, but still had to figure out how they could get a message across to an unsophisticated reading public. The direct approach seemed the most useful and so those first writers tended to write the way they spoke, making their pamphlets read like conversations.

Luther certainly employed this "write-it-as-you-say-it" style. And like most of us today, Luther's speech when he wrote about something or someone whom he considered dangerous was littered with overstatements, crude remarks, name-calling, profanity and any number of things we would not want to be quoted on. While the hair on the back of our necks might stand up to read what Luther wrote, his readers accepted it. Moreover, nearly every educated person of the age wrote in similar fashion. Even the citizens of Rome and the employees of the Catholic Church itself criticized the popes and were just as

crude as Luther in *Against the Roman Papacy*.

For example, Pope Leo X (the pope who excommunicated Luther) was publicly insulted as an atheist and extravagant in his inhuman desires. Pope Alexander VI (who reigned when Columbus was exploring the New World) was widely reputed to be a poisoner and a worse tyrant of Rome than Nero. (Nero, the Roman emperor who supposedly fiddled while Rome burned, was a noted persecutor of Christians, burning them for their alleged arson of downtown Rome.)

One must also keep in mind the situation that confronted the Lutheran Church when Luther wrote in late 1545. The storm clouds of war had gathered, and Luther knew that an alliance of Lutheran princes would soon be fighting the German emperor backed by the money and influence of the pope. *Against the Roman Papacy* must therefore be regarded as war propaganda. It was Luther's final attempt to inspire the faithful to fight what he probably thought was the final struggle between the children of darkness and the children of light at the end of the world. And, few leaders have ever minced words about an opponent on the eve of what promised to be the decisive battle.

But what about the substance of what Luther was saying? Ought moderns condemn Luther's intolerance? I would say

no, if for no other reason than that it would do no good; the dead cannot change their views.

Those who insist on chastising the past tend to hold it to a standard higher than the past knew or could have understood. Contemporary standards of public toleration for differing beliefs, to which I fully subscribe, are relatively new ones, no older than two hundred and fifty years or so. Luther's age was motivated by the social, cultural and political ideal of unity, not diversity.

Luther and his contemporaries viewed disagreement as a deviation from an absolute standard of truth, a deviation requiring constant condemnation. This need for unity became increasingly obvious to Luther as he aged, because it was breaking down, and because he knew he had played a role in its destruction by breaking from the unity of the Catholic Church. By the 1540's there were leagues of perceived deviants, not just the new heretics, demanding condemnation such as the Calvinists and the Baptists, but the old ones such as the Catholics and the Jews.

But what about the notion that Luther's religious hatred of Jews set off a chain of events which led to the Holocaust?

Those who have set forth this argument have done so for the right reasons. Unspeakable cruelty demands plain denunciation. But good people are not nec-

essarily good historians. Luther was not a single voice crying out against the Jews in the wilderness. Unfortunately he was part of a large choir. One would be hard pressed to name a public person in the sixteenth century who wanted to tolerate and protect the Jews. There were a few scholars who admired their literature and wanted to keep the Hebrew language alive (mostly for its use in Biblical and theological studies), but most, if not all of them, believed the Jews were a scourge on Christendom. To mark out Luther especially for blame, then, is not fair.

Also, those who hold to this Luther-to-the-Holocaust view of history, or similar ones, display great faith in the power of history. To them history must be like a raging river which sweeps along people and events as it gains momentum. I frankly do not hold this view. History is more of a collection of ideas which most people use or abuse for some current purpose. In Luther's case, moderns have waded through the text of *On the Jews and Their Lies* (nearly one-hundred-seventy pages in English) in order to find two-and-one-half pages that can be seen as a dim precursor to the Holocaust. I cannot image Nazi stormtroopers leafing through page after page of Luther's works to inflame their antisemitism. Nor did Adolph Hitler, judg-

ing from Hitler's only reference to Luther in *Mein Kampf*. It is far more historically sound to look to the life and times of Hitler for reasons for the Holocaust than to point to Luther four centuries before the event.

These remarks have been wide-ranging and need to be brought back to the original question. Why could Luther not keep a civil tongue? Because Luther was not thoroughly modern and his values were not our values. This observation is not given as a defense, but as a useful explanation. It is certainly not a rationalization for tolerating intolerance among the living. Although we cannot do anything to reform Luther, there are likely many things we can do about ourselves. One cannot pick up a newspaper these days without reading about evils of this generation's various hatreds demanding our moral outrage and determined action.†

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

If any wish to read Luther's two tracts on the Jews, *That Jesus Was Born a Jew* is in the American Edition of Luther's Works, vol. 45, pages 195-229 and *On the Jews and Their Lies* is in vol. 47, pages 121-306. *Against the Roman Papacy Founded by the Devil* has not been translated.

For an open-minded examination of Old Luther's writings see Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther's Last Battles*, Ithaca: Cornell, 1983.

James Kittelson's, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986 is a readable biography which does not divide Luther's career into black-and-white halves.

Nathan Jastram

The New Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament

"Which translation of the Bible do you recommend?" Pastors, teachers, and other committed Christians sometimes wonder how to answer the question. On the one hand, newer translations are easier to understand, and might be more accurate, because they make use of recent advances in scholarship. Such advances can illuminate the meanings of unknown words or phrases, or correct some of the errors of earlier translations. But on the other hand, newer translations may be less reliable because they may be influenced by faith-destroying modern theories.

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989) provokes the same split response. In some respects it is easier to understand and more accurate than earlier translations. But in other respects it is less reliable. Whether or not the NRSV should be recommended depends in part

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on how one weighs the improvements it makes in textual criticism and style of translation against the problems it introduces in its attempt to avoid "linguistic sexism," its rendering of messianic passages, and its translation of the first two chapters of Genesis.

The NRSV attempts to apply textual criticism conscientiously and therefore makes use of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the 1940s and 1950s at the ancient site of Qumran. These scrolls often preserve a text very similar to that of the previously known Hebrew text upon which all modern translations of the Bible are based. But the scrolls also contain many variant readings, some of which are unique, and some of which agree with readings known from the ancient Greek, Latin, Aramaic, or Syriac translations. Now that the texts of almost all the Biblical scrolls are available to scholars, responsible translators must evaluate the various texts to decide which is closest to the original and therefore should be used for the translation.

The best example of the NRSV applying textual criticism on the basis of new texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls is provided in the books of Samuel. A glance at the textual notes at the bottom of each page shows that many readings have been

influenced by the ancient scrolls. Perhaps the most spectacular change occurs immediately before I Samuel 11, where the following paragraph about the wicked king Nahash has been included in the translation on the basis of a manuscript from Qumran:

Now Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.

The ancient historian Josephus was familiar with this extra paragraph, and the original text of Samuel may have included it. If so, the paragraph was omitted by a careless scribe as he copied the text, and his shortened text became the standard for many later copies. That the standard Hebrew text is capable of suffering from scribal omissions is undeniable, as the first verse of I Samuel 13 shows, where the numbers of years associated with Saul's kingship have been lost from all reliable manuscripts ("Saul was..years old when he began to reign; and he reigned..and two years over Israel" NRSV). It is commendable that the NRSV strives to present the best possible text in its translation and

uses new readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls when those readings appear to be closer to the original text.

The books of Samuel, however, provide an extreme example of the changes introduced by modern textual criticism. The translators have been rather cautious in introducing new readings in the other Old Testament books. In those books, it is the changed style of translation that distinguishes this version from its predecessor, the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

Particularly welcome is the responsible attempt to translate a troublesome little Hebrew word, *hinneh*. This word was consistently translated as "behold" in the RSV, although "behold" is neither a common English word outside of the Church, nor does it carry the meaning "to perceive through sight, to gaze upon" (the meaning of "behold" according to Webster). Rather, *hinneh* conveys the sense of "here-and-nowness," and must be translated in a variety of ways or even omitted from the translation according to the context. Certainly the NRSV's translation of Genesis 37:9 ("Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me").

Another welcome shift in the translation is the removal of excessive "ands" in the narrative sections. In Hebrew, most

clauses in a narrative sequence are connected with simple conjunctions, "ands," and the reader is responsible for determining the relationship between the clauses. In English, on the other hand, good narrative is peppered with subordinating words ("since," "although," "then," "after," "therefore," "when," etc.) that spell out relationships between clauses; no "and" is needed to connect one sentence to another. The NRSV moves in the proper direction here, eliminating some of the "ands" in the RSV, but does not progress as far as it could have. The relationships between more clauses could have been made clearer by using more subordinating words.

Another goal of the NRSV was to remove, as far as possible, the "linguistic sexism" in the Bible. The problem is that there is no common-gender third person singular pronoun in English or in Hebrew. Therefore, passages that were intended to apply to any individual, man or woman, have traditionally been written in the masculine singular in both languages. The masculine gender of the language is not meant to exclude women in such cases, but critics contend that women *are* effectively excluded by such language. The NRSV attempts to solve this problem by paraphrasing such passages, either by

"simple rephrasing or by introducing plural forms when this does not distort the meaning of the passage" (NRSV Introduction). This is a policy fraught with difficulties. It is commendable to try to avoid forms of language that improperly exclude any class of people from passages of Scripture. But to change the text in the process leads to several problems. For instance, the theological teaching that each individual is responsible for his own sin, taught in Ezekiel 18, applies to both men and women. It seems, then, that no objection should be raised when the NRSV translates the first four verses using "parent" and "child," rather than "father" and "son." But verses five through eighteen demand the "father/son" language. One of the sins mentioned there is that of defiling a neighbor's wife, which is a sin committed only by men. In those verses the NRSV retains "father" and "son," but it reverts to "parent" and "child" in verse twenty (though even there the pronouns at the end of the verse remain masculine: "the righteousness of the righteous shall be *his* own..."). In the final verses (21-32), all singular references are made plural, thereby "solving" the gender problem, but weakening the point of the whole chapter, that each individual is responsible for his own sin. Though good intentions may

have motivated the linguistic license taken in this chapter (changing the subjects from "father" and "son" to "parent" and "child," and from singular to plural), the result is a literary mess in which the unity of all its segments is destroyed. The *individual* responsibility for sin is muted, and the *individual* hope for forgiveness is decreased.

To change a singular pronoun to a plural one to obtain inclusive language may seem a small price to pay for a large reward. But such changes can be costly, as the example above shows. Scripture itself uses the distinction between singular and plural to explain a messianic prophecy in Galatians 3:16: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ" (New International Version [NIV]). If a masculine singular form originally referred to the coming Messiah, changing the form to a plural effaces the messianic prophecy. For instance, consider Psalm 8:4-6:

[W]hat is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet" (NIV).

These words are quoted in Hebrews 2:5-9 as proof that though (the singular)

Jesus lived a life of humiliation, he is now crowned with glory at the right hand of God and rules over all creation. The NRSV has a significantly different translation of Psalm 8:

"[W]hat are *human beings* that you are mindful of *them*, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made *them* a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given *them* a little dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under *their* feet" (NRSV).

Such a translation makes the passage refer to people in general rather than to Jesus specifically. The shift from singular to plural here not only deprives the passage of its messianic meaning, but also opposes the scriptural explanation of the passage in Hebrews 2:8-9, "In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (NIV).

The rendering of messianic prophecies is of key interest in evaluating new translations of the Old Testament. The following three charts show some comparative examples of how messianic prophecies are rendered in the RSV, the NRSV, and the NIV. In most rows, an asterisk marks the translation that is most accurate and is most supportive of a messianic interpretation. The lists show that the NRSV has often translated messianic prophecies less accurately than either the RSV or the NIV, and that the best of the three in this respect is the NIV.

NRSV THE SAME AS RSV

REFERENCE	RSV	NRSV	NIV
2 Sam. 7:11	"will make you a house"	"will make you a house"	* "will establish a house for you"
Ps. 2:12	"kiss his feet"	"kiss his feet"	* "Kiss the Son"
Prov. 8:22	"created me"	"created me"	* "brought me forth"

NRSV WORSE THAN RSV

REFERENCE	RSV	NRSV	NIV
Gen. 49:10	* "until he comes to whom it belongs"	"until tribute comes to him" to whom it belongs"	* "until he comes
Deut. 18:15	"him you shall heed"	"you shall heed such a prophet"	* "You must listen to him"
2 Sam. 7:14	* "I will be his father"	"I will be a father to him"	* "I will be his father"
2 Sam. 7:19	"and hast shown me future generations, O Lord GOD!"	"May this be instruction for the people, O Lord GOD!"	"Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD?"
Ps. 22:16	"they have pierced my hands and feet"	"My hands and feet have shriveled"	* "they have pierced my hands and my feet"
Is. 7:14	"Behold, a young woman shall conceive"	"Look, the young woman is with child"	* "The virgin will be with child"

REFERENCE	RSV	NRSV	NIV
Gen. 12:3	"shall bless themselves"	*"shall be blessed"	*"will be blessed"
Gen 12:7	"descendants"	*"offspring"	*"offspring"
Ps. 45:6	"Your divine throne"	*"Your throne, O God"	"Your throne, O God"
Micah 5:5	"And this shall be peace... peace."	*"and he shall be the one of	"And he will be their peace"

Finally a few words should be said about the first two chapters of Genesis. Here several unfortunate translations occur in the NRSV. The first verse of the Bible is translated as a temporal clause ("In the beginning *when* God created the heavens and the earth,...")NRSV) rather than as a statement that God created the universe from nothing ("In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (RSV). The second verse is translated as a weather report ("while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" NRSV) rather than as a statement that the Holy Spirit was active in creation ("and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" RSV). And the NRSV continues the tradition of the RSV by teaching two different creation accounts that cannot be harmonized. Although Genesis 1 teaches that animals were created *before* Adam, the NRSV makes Genesis 2:18-19 teach that animals were created after Adam ("Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make

him a helper as his partner.' So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field...". The reading of the NIV is preferable here because it does not import such a blatant contradiction into the translation ("The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' Now the LORD God *had formed* out of the ground all the beasts of the field...")

While the criticisms leveled above are significant, the NRSV has much that is commendable, and can be used with profit. In addition to the strengths that have already been mentioned, a random check of several poetic sections shows that its translation is at times more accurate than that of the NIV. Should the NRSV be recommended, then, as a good translation of the Old Testament? Perhaps the best answer is also the least satisfying: in some respects yes; in some respects no. The NRSV can be a valuable alternative to other available translations, but it must be used with caution.✚

Rich Bimler

To My Friend, Ben

Ben Eggers died on May 21, 1993, after welcoming 1200 persons attending the 100th anniversary Reunion celebration of the Walther League, sponsored by Wheat Ridge Ministries.

In one sense, his death was the way Ben would have wanted it. Here he was with 1200 of his closest friends at a great celebration, and the Lord calls him home to an even bigger reunion.

Ben liked to party. He was a real celebrator. As someone once said, "Where two or three Lutherans were gathered, there was Ben, in the midst of them!"

Ben lived life to the fullest, enjoying the gifts and opportunities that the Lord provided him as husband, father, grandpa, teacher, principal, district executive, national youth ministry executive, LEA president, card player, golfer, volunteer, and also as a friend to so many of us.

He touched hundreds and hundreds of lives as a mentor, model, minister, and as a man of God. Recently, as an area representative for Wheat Ridge Ministries, he was serving energetically by telling the story of health and hope to people, and encouraging them to contribute to the Walther League Legacy Fund.

As his wife, Lillian, said on the night of his death, "Ben really had a great day today!" He was proud and happy of the opportunities that came his way.

We, too, are proud and blessed that Ben's celebrative lifestyle touched our lives in big and small ways.

Thanks, Ben, for being my friend, for trusting in me, affirming me, nudging me, loving me, and supporting me. And isn't it great that so many others can say these same words about Ben touching their lives also? And this is the beauty of our friend, Ben.

Thanks, Lord, for Ben. And help us now to continue to live a life of joy and celebration as we celebrate our own resurrection and life in you.✚

Multiplying

Ministries

Shirley K. Morgenthaler

An Object Lesson in Trust

This past spring, we watched a mother house finch tend a nest in the wreath on our front door. She had built it before we even noticed. It was nestled between the circle of the grapevine wreath and the window of the storm door.

As the days and weeks elapsed, we tried to avoid using the front door. But walking around the house for the morning paper and the afternoon mail was a bother...and opening the front door was too automatic a habit to change. So at least twice daily, the door would swing open, then closed, as we continued our daily routines. And, daily, the postal delivery worker would disturb her nest yet a third time!

After each disturbance, she would return, only to await the next interruption of her nest-sitting. What faithfulness! What faith. She would leave the nest, totally vulnerable and open, only to return after the danger and disturbance were past.

One day, the awesome actually happened. There, in the shallow, precariously perched, nest was a baby bird...wet, panting, rolled in a ball...but breathing...alive! Soon we noticed a crack in a second egg. Over the next several days, we monitored the hatching of three baby birds. Had those matted masses of furry feathers really fit inside the tiny blue eggs?

Over the next three weeks, the activity at our front door quickened. We witnessed frequent trips of the mother bird, as she fed her brood. Then another type of activity was added, as our newly full nest became the neighborhood field trip for young and old.

Nothing, it seemed, disturbed their calm. Nothing interrupted their trust.

How did they do it? How did they maintain a tranquility in the midst of such a precarious position? How did they trust their mother to return after each abrupt departure? Didn't they know they were perched five feet above a cement landing? Didn't they realize that their nest was attached to a wreath that was hanging by a single nail? Didn't

they understand that the swinging door on which they relied could swing too far, too fast, and catapult them into a brick wall? Where did all this trust come from?

The answers weren't so difficult. These baby birds—and their mother—were an object lesson in trust...total trust. They didn't spend time worrying about the noise, the abrupt movements, the cement below them, the brick wall beside them. They didn't expend energy on the what-ifs, the whys. They trusted. Complete, total, unwavering trust.

What a lesson! Was I ready to learn it? Could I imitate their tranquility of trust? Could I allow my Heavenly Father to take care of me the way the mother took care of those baby birds? Could I trust that the bumps and swings of my life were being controlled, and that my worrying wasn't going to change anything?

Could I trust that the place in which my life was currently perched was the right one for me, chosen by Someone with a broader perspective and experience than mine? Did I have the courage to trust that much? Could I, too, experience the tranquility of trust?

Can you?? Furthermore, can you communicate that tranquility, that trust to the "baby birds" in your classroom?

How can you help the children in your care trust in spite of the swinging doors of shared custody, the bumps of poverty, the slams of abuse? How can you communicate care and safety in spite of the thorns of parental stress, the cement of inadequate housing, the brick walls of prejudice and low expectations? How?

How will you learn about the needs of the children in your care this year? How will you build a tranquil nest that will protect them from the swings and bumps and slams around them? How will you help their parents support and build that same type of tranquility in their homes and families?

Can you build a trust and tranquility and predictability of nurturing that will teach them about the nurturing and tranquility that our Heavenly Father gives to each of us, no matter how precarious our circumstances?

As I extricated that nest from our door wreath this summer, I was struck by its fragility. That mother bird trusted her surroundings—the storm door, the wreath—to provide security and stability for her nestling environment. "Consider the lilies," I remembered..."notice the birds of the air."

If God takes care of them, why not us? Can we expect less? Are we willing to rest with tranquility as our Heavenly Father takes care of us? Are we willing to be models of tranquility so that the "baby birds" in our care can experience that trust and learn from it? Are we ready?✚

Carl Schalk

"Lord, now you let your servant depart. . ."

First

Person

Singular

There they were, about a dozen men and women, discussing funerals.

The gathering was a group of senior citizens who met regularly at the church for fellowship, worship, and to hear topics of interest to them. They called themselves the Cornerstones, open to all who were living when the church's cornerstone was laid in the 1920s.

The subject matter was presented by the parish's church musician. The topic was the funeral service, the rite for the Burial of the Dead. But they were not discussing just any funeral service. They were discussing *their* funeral service.

They examined the rite for the Burial of the Dead from the hymnal. They discussed hymns which speak of the resurrection and which have been especially meaningful in their lives. They talked about the particular appropriateness of conducting the burial rite in the parish church, the significance and use of the funeral pall which covers the coffin, and the importance of celebrating Holy Communion.

The organist and choirmaster spoke of the role of music in the service and how the choir might be helpful. Of how the children of the parish school choir were always ready to participate with hymns of comfort and resurrection should families wish it.

They were learning what the church's burial rite had to teach them—and all of us—about life, death, and resurrection. The discussion did not begin and end with "What I want for my funeral service." They spoke freely, openly, and without embarrassment.

In a very real way, they were preparing themselves individually—and as part of the community of the Church—for their death and for the final witness they might give to their families, friends, and to the world when the sign of the cross—first made on them at their baptism—would be made on them for the last time as they are laid into the ground.

Here was a group of Christians readying themselves—hearts and minds—for an event for which none of us is ever really prepared. It was a simple, frank, and honest discussion about a subject we will all have to face. And it was welcomed. Not one person present, I am certain, was the same after that conversation.

Such a simple thing to do, yet how often does such discussion go on in a parish? It is certainly something to think—and talk—about.✚

*English Signs: China—Summer 1993**

1. No admittance accept passengers.
2. Already disinfected. (Written on chopstick wrapper)
3. Entracne. ("Entrance")
4. Special use to cure a wound. (Sign on first aid kit)
5. No smoing, no spitting.
6. This animal is a member of the feling family. (feline)
7. This animal has a beer's hooves. (bear's paws)
8. A child is not allowed to occupate a seat if he is one metre lower. (if he is shorter than one meter)
9. Please step forward. (sign in front of a urinal)
10. Shanghai Erectlicco Co. (electrical)
11. The Forbidden City is one of the 40 topping tourist attractings.
12. Business stop. (=closed for the day)
13. Chewing gum: Kiss mint charming. Sweetie in your mouth.

** Professor William Ewald was a member of a group of Lutheran professors who toured the China mainland in June 1993. The above reflect a record he kept of amusing translations, some simply phonetic and other just literal.*

The Children: Our Future

A Final Word

"I believe the children are our future." The line is the recurring theme in a contemporary ballad. As I listened to it, travelling down a Chicago freeway, I thought about it for quite some time. The children—these special gifts of God, these little people who deserve the best of care and nurturing, these little fragile lives who simply wouldn't make it except for their connection to the lives of others, these children who grow to astound and sometimes disappoint us—these are our future.

We have more than a passing interest in the future these days. Futurists think long and hard about what the coming days will bring. They write books that we read. Pollsters and researchers complete one study after another that draw our interest and attention to facts that they believe will shape the future. Questions come to mind. What will tomorrow bring? What difference will all the data we have uncovered make? Can I be ready for the surprises the future is sure to bring? What about the children?

Thinking about the future can be a worthwhile exercise. An individual once said, "We tend to live life forward but think it backward." It's a thoughtful observation and some "backward", reflective thinking about the past could very well be in order—especially if we care about the children in our future.

There are some basic principles that we would do well to heed as individuals, parents, members of the church or as Christian educators. The children in our future dare not be robbed of them.

There is no substitute for telling and living the love of Christ.

There is no substitute for giving genuine, unconditional love.

There is no substitute for discipline that is balanced and fair.

There is no substitute for the steady encouragement and support that affirms self-worth.

There is no substitute for quality time given by caring adults.

There is no substitute for forgiving a child's misdeeds.

There is no substitute for time to work and time to play.

There is no substitute for the excitement brought by learning about the world of man and the things of God.

There is no substitute for the children—they are our future. They must be much more than just a good line in a contemporary ballad.✚

Early Years

More than two-thirds of the nation's 3- to 5-year-olds, or 5.7 million children, get care and education on a regular basis from persons other than their parents, a new report from the National Center for Education Statistics shows.

The study based on a survey conducted in the spring of 1991, showed that on average preschoolers spend 19 hours a week in such programs. Black children have the highest participation rates and Hispanics the lowest.

The study showed that 53 percent of preschool children are in center-based programs while 30 percent are in home-based ones.

Copies of the report, "Profiles of Preschool Children's Care and Early Education Program Participation" (Order number 065-000-00554-9), are available for \$3.25 each from the Superintendent of Documents, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15250-7954. (*Education Week*, June 23, 1993).

Book
Reviews

Black Christians—The Untold Lutheran Story

Jeff G. Johnson

St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House

264 pages, \$17.95 ppbk.

ISBN # 0-570-04558-4

After 300 years of work by Lutherans, there are today only about 132,000 black Lutherans in the United States. Why so few? In his efforts to answer this question, the author discredits three persistent myths: that Euro-American Lutherans have had little contact with black people, that blacks have no real history within the Lutheran tradition, and that the religious traditions of blacks and Euro-American Lutherans are so different that blacks simply won't respond to the Lutheran Church.

The book traces the efforts of The Lutheran Church to work with African-Americans from as early as the 1600's to the present. Johnson recounts the successes of efforts at a variety of places and times in the history of the New World. He also describes the failures. He does so in an objective, fact-filled manner. The author avoids the temptation to excoriate the mistakes of the past. He does, however, faithfully record the ethnocentric, condescending, and naive attitudes of the establishment which led to failure.

As we move into a time when the percentage of non-whites continues to grow steadily, Johnson's book can serve as a perceptive look at the past and a source of wisdom as the church works with the opportunities God gives it to make the Gospel come alive for all of His children.

GLEN KUCK

St. Paul Lutheran School, Austin/Chicago, Illinois

Almost Adult—Preteen Story Devotions

Charles S. Mueller

St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993

160 pages, \$6.99

Using two preteens, Laura and Lonnie, as the main characters, the author has succeeded in crafting a fine book for young people. Issues of concern to preteens are dealt with in a non-preachy manner. Each of the 53 devotions begins with a Bible reading. A question usually follows which makes the reader analyze the verses closely. In each devotion, one of the characters must cope with issues such as making friends, dishonesty, fighting, feelings and alienation, academic success and failure, parents, teachers, and witnessing. Each ends with a few thoughts and questions that make the readers apply the situation of Laura and Lonnie to their own situation. The book does well in drawing the reader in to be an active participant.

The book would be of benefit to any preteen and could be used by classroom teachers to stimulate relevant discussions of issues for students ages 9-12.

GLEN KUCK

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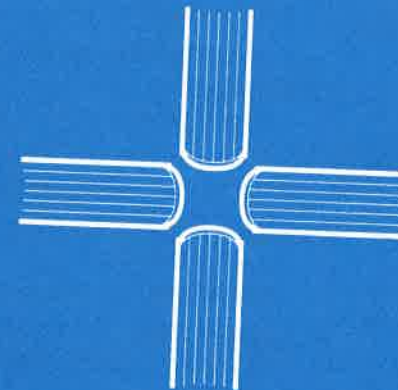
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LUTHERAN EDUCATION



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